This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

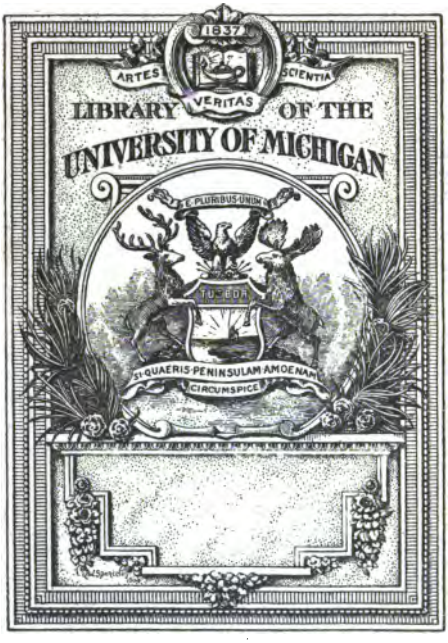
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

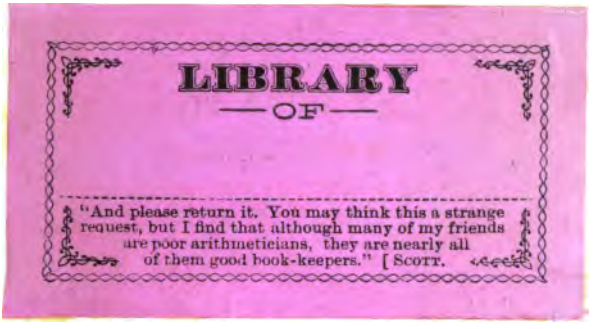
+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`


1837
ARTES
VERITAS
SCIENTIA
LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
E PLURIBUS UNUM
SI QUAERIS PENINSULAM AMOENAM
CIRCUMSPICE

828
B 967
H72
1840



Drawn by Jas. Davie. Engd. by W. J. Cooke.

ALLOWAY KIRK.

and the New Bridge of Doon.

Published by Archd. Fullarton & Co. Glasgow.

WORKS

OF

ROBERT BURNS.

VOL. III.

Mossgiel.

GLASGOW.

ARCHIBALD WYLLIE & Co.

21349

THE

WORKS

OF

ROBERT BURNS.

EDITED BY

THE ETTRICK SHEPHERD,

AND

WILLIAM MOTHERWELL, ESQ.

VOL. III.

GLASGOW:
ARCHIBALD FULLARTON, AND CO.
110, BRUNSWICK STREET;
AND 6, ROXBURGH PLACE, EDINBURGH.

1839.

GLASGOW:
FULLARTON AND CO., PRINTERS, VILLAFIELD.

CONTENTS OF VOLUME THIRD.

The pieces marked thus † are not contained in Dr Currie's edition; and a considerable proportion of them have not appeared in any of the old editions of Burns' Works—while others have appeared only in an imperfect form.

SONGS.

	PAGE
† THE tither morn	1
† O saw ye my Dearie	2
† The Cooper o' Cuddie	3
Lovely Polly Stewart	4
† The Highland Laddie	4
† Lovely Davies	5
† Nithsdale's welcome hame	6
† As I was a wand'ring	7
† It is na, Jean, thy bonny face	8
† The Lass of Ecclefechan	9
Ca' the Ewes	10
† Merry hae I been teethin' a heckle	11
† Frae the friends and land I love	12
† Our thrissles flourished	12
† Where hae ye been	13
O gude ale comes	14
† Simmer's a pleasant time	15
† Jamie, come try me	15
† The Captain's Lady	16
Beware o' bonnie Ann	17
As I came in by our gate end	18
Wee Willie Gray	18
† Ae day a braw wooer	19

PAGE

† Gude e'en to you, kimmer 20
† Scroggam 22
Robin shure in hairst 22
† Meg o' the Mill 23
† There's news, lasses, news 24
† O that I had ne'er been married 25
But lately seen 25
Could aught of song 26
† Here's to thy health 27
† O steer her up 28
O aye my wife she dang me 29
Oh, wert thou in the cauld blast 30
O wha is she that lo'es me 31
† O lay thy loof in mine, lass 32
† O wha will to St Stephen's house 33
† The Highland widow's lament 35
† Cauld is the e'enin' blast 36
There was a bonnie lass 37
† O Mally's meek, Mally's sweet 37
† The Farewell 38
† Lady Mary Ann. 41
My lady's gown, there's gairs upon't 43

CORRESPONDENCE.

No.

I. Mr Thomson to Burns, (1792) desiring the Bard to furnish verses for some of the Scottish airs, and to revise former songs 47
II. Burns to Mr T. promising assistance 48
III. Mr T. to Burns, sending some Tunes 50
IV. Burns to Mr T. with 'The Lea-Rig,' and 'Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary?' 51
V. Burns to Mr T. with 'My wife's a winsome wee thing,' and 'O saw ye bonnie Lesley?' 56
VI. Burns to Mr T. with 'Highland Mary' 60
VII. Mr T. to Burns. Thanks, and critical observations 64
VIII. Burns to Mr T., with an additional stanza to 'The Lea-rig' 67

PAGE

IX. Burns to Mr T., with 'Auld Rob Morris,' and 'Duncan Gray' 68
X. Burns to Mr T., with 'O poortith cauld,' &c., and 'Galla Water' 71
XI. Mr T. to Burns, Jan. 1793, desiring anecdotes on the origin of particular songs. Tytler of Woodhouse-lee —Pleyel—Sends Peter Pindar's 'Lord Gregory'—Postscript from the Hon. A. Erskine . . . 73
XII. Burns to Mr T. Has Mr Tytler's anecdotes, and means to give his own—sends his own 'Lord Gregory' 76
XIII. Burns to Mr T., with 'Mary Morison' . . . 79
XIV. Burns to Mr T., with 'Wandering Willie' . . 81
XV. Burns to Mr T. with 'Open the door to me, Oh!' . 83
XVI. Burns to Mr T., with 'Jessie' 84
XVII. Mr T. to Burns, with a list of songs, and 'Wandering Willie,' altered 84
XVIII. Burns to Mr T., with 'When wild war's deadly blast was blawn,' and 'Meg o' the Mill' . . 87
XIX. Burns to Mr T. Voice of Coila—Criticism—Origin of 'The Lass o' Patie's Mill' 90
XX. Mr T. to Burns 93
XXI. Burns to Mr T. Simplicity requisite in a song—One poet should not mangle the works of another . 94
XXII. Burns to Mr T. 'Farewell thou stream that winding flows'—Wishes that the national music may preserve its native features 96
XXIII. Mr T. to Burns. Thanks and observations . . 97
XXIV. Burns to Mr T., with 'Blithe hae I been on yon hill' 98
XXV. Burns to Mr T., with 'O Logan, sweetly didst thou glide.' 'O gin my love were yon red rose,' &c. . 100
XXVI. Mr T. to Burns, inclosing a note—Thanks . 105
XXVII. Burns to Mr T., with 'There was a lass and she was fair' 106
XXVIII. Burns to Mr T. Hurt at the idea of pecuniary recompense—Remarks on songs . . . 108
XXIX. Mr T. to Burns. Musical expression . . 113
XXX. Burns to Mr T. For Mr Clarke 114

PAGE
XXXI. Burns to Mr T., with 'Phillis the fair' . . 114
XXXII. Mr T. to Burns. Mr Allan—Drawing from 'John Anderson, my jo' 116
XXXIII. Burns to Mr T., with 'Had I a cave,' &c.—Some airs common to Scotland and Ireland . . 117
XXXIV. Burns to Mr T., with 'By Allan stream I chanced to rove' 118
XXXV. Burns to Mr T., with 'Whistle and I'll come to you, my lad,' and 'Awa wi' your belles and your beauties' 120
XXXVI. Burns to Mr T., with 'Come let me take thee to my breast' 123
XXXVII. Burns to Mr T. 'Daintie Davie' . . 125
XXXVIII. Mr T. to Burns. Delighted with the productions of Burns's muse 126
XXXIX. Burns to Mr T., with 'Bruce to his troops at Bannockburn' 127
XL. Burns to Mr T., with 'Behold the hour, the boat arrive' 129
XLI. Mr T. to Burns. Observations on 'Bruce to his troops' 131
XLII. Burns to Mr T. Remarks on songs in Mr T.'s list—His own method of forming a song—'Thou has left me ever, Jamie'—'Where are the joys I hae met in the morning'—'Auld lang syne' 133
XLIII. Burns to Mr T., with a variation of 'Bannockburn' 140
XLIV. Mr T. to Burns. Observations 142
XLV. Burns to Mr T. On 'Bannockburn'—sends 'Fair Jenny' 143
XLVI. Burns to Mr T., with 'Deluded swain, the pleasure'—Remarks 146
XLVII. Burns to Mr T., with 'Thine am I, my faithful fair,'—'O condescend, dear charming maid'—'The Nightingale'—'Laura'—(the three last by G. Turnbull) 148
XLVIII. Mr T. to Burns. Apprehensions—Thanks . 152
XLIX. Burns to Mr T. with 'Husband, husband, cease your strife!' and 'Wilt thou be my dearie?' . . 153
L. Mr T. to Burns, 1794. Melancholy comparison be-

PAGE
tween Burns and Carlini—Allan's sketch from the 'Cotter's Saturday Night' 155
LI. Burns to Mr T. Praise of Mr Allan—'Banks of Cree' 156
LII. Burns to Mr T. Pleyel in France—'Here, where the Scottish Muse immortal lives,' presented to Miss Graham of Fintry, with a copy of Mr Thomson's Collection 157
LIII. Mr T. to Burns. Does not expect to hear from Pleyel soon, but desires to be prepared with the poetry . 158
LIV. Burns to Mr T. with 'On the seas and far away' . 159
LV. Mr T. to Burns. Criticism 161
LVI. Burns to Mr T., with 'Ca' the yowes to the knowes' 161
LVII. Burns to Mr T., with 'She says she lo'es me best of a'—'O let me in,' &c.—Stanza to Dr Maxwell . 163
LVIII. Mr T. to Burns, advising him to write a Musical Drama 166
LIX. Mr T. to Burns. Has been examining Scottish collections—Ritson—Difficult to obtain ancient melodies in their original state 168
LX. Burns to Mr T. Recipe for producing a love-song—'Saw ye my Phely'—Remarks and anecdotes—'How long and dreary is the night'—'Let not woman e'er complain'—'The Lover's morning salute to his mistress'—'The Auld Man' 169
LXI. Mr T. to Burns. Wishes he knew the inspiring fair one—Ritson's historical essay not interesting—Allan—Maggie Lauder 177
LXII. Burns to Mr T. Has begun his anecdotes, &c. 'My Chloris, mark how green the groves'—Love—'It was the charming month of May'—'Lassie wi' the lint-white locks' 178
LXIII. Burns to Mr T. 'Farewell thou stream'—Miller—Clarke—The black keys—Instance of the difficulty of tracing the origin of ancient airs . . . 183
LXIV. Mr T. to Burns, with three copies of the Scottish airs 186
LXV. Burns to Mr T., with 'O Philly, happy be that day'

PAGE
—Starting note—'Contented wi' little, and cantie wi' mair' 187
LXVI. Burns to Mr T., with 'Canst thou leave me thus, my Katy'—Stock and horn, &c. 191
LXVII. Mr T. to Burns. Praise—Desires more songs of the humorous cast—Means to have a picture from 'The Soldier's return' 194
LXVIII. Burns to Mr T., with 'My Nannie's awa' . 198
LXIX. Burns to Mr T. (1795) with 'For a' that and a' that,' and 'Sweet fa's the eve on Craigie-burn' . 199
LXX. Mr T. to Burns. Thanks 203
LXXI. Burns to Mr T. 'O lassie, art thou sleeping yet?' and the Answer 203
LXXII. Burns to Mr T. 'Praise of Ecclefechan' . 206
LXXIII. Mr T. to Burns. Thanks 207
LXXIV. Burns to Mr T. 'Address to the Woodlark'—'On Chloris being ill'—'Their groves o' sweet myrtle,' &c.—''Twas na her bonnie blue e'e,' &c. . 208
LXXV. Mr T. to Burns, with Allan's design from 'The Cotter's Saturday Night' 212
LXXVI. Burns to Mr T., with 'How cruel are the parents,' and 'Mark yonder pomp of costly fashion' . . 213
LXXVII. Burns to Mr T. Thanks for Allan's designs . 215
LXXVIII. Mr T. to Burns. Compliment . . . 216
LXXIX. Burns to Mr T. with an improvement in 'Whistle and I'll come to you, my lad'—'O this is no my ain lassie'—'Now spring has clad the grove in green'—'O bonny was yon rosy brier'—''Tis friendship's pledge, my young, fair friend' 217
LXXX. Mr T. to Burns, introducing Dr Brianton . . 222
LXXXI. Burns to Mr T. 'Forlorn my love, no comfort near' 223
LXXXII. Burns to Mr T. 'Last May a braw wooer cam down the lang glen'—'Why, why tell thy lover,' a fragment 225
LXXXIII. Mr T. to Burns 227
LXXXIV. Mr T. to Burns, (1796) after an awful pause 227
LXXXV. Burns to Mr T. Thanks for P. Pindar, &c. 'Hey for a lass wi' a tocher' 228

PAGE

LXXXVI. Mr T. to Burns. Allan has designed some plates for an octavo edition 230

LXXXVII. Burns to Mr T. Afflicted by sickness, but pleased with Mr Allan's etchings 230

LXXXVIII. Mr T. to Burns. Sympathy—encouragement 232

LXXXIX. Burns to Mr T., with 'Here's a health to ane I lo'e dear' 233

XC. Burns to Mr T., introducing Mr Lewars—Has taken a fancy to review his songs—hopes to recover . . 234

XCI. Burns to Mr T. Dreading the horrors of a jail, solicits the advance of five pounds, and incloses 'Fairest maid on Devon banks' 235

XCII. Mr T. to Burns. Sympathy—Advises a volume of poetry to be published by subscription—Pope published the Iliad so 236

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE.

No.

I. To William Burness.—Dec. 27, 1781. His health somewhat improved, but heartily tired of life. How much he is pleased with the "Revelation." . . 257

II. To John Murdoch.—Jan. 15, 1783. Giving an account of his studies and temper of mind . . . 259

III. To James Burness.—June 21, 1783. His father's illness, and wretched state of the country . . . 262

IV. To Miss E——.—Lochlea, 1783. On love . . 265

V. To Miss E——.—Lochlea, 1783. On love . . 266

VI. To Miss E——.—Lochlea, 1783. On love . . 268

VII. To Miss E——.—Lochlea, 1783. On her refusal of his offer of marriage 270

VIII. To Robert Riddel.—1783. Observations and hints regarding poetry and human life . . . 271

IX. To James Burness.—Feb. 17, 1784. On the death of his father 290

† X. To James Burness.—Aug. 1784. Account of the Buchanites 291

† XI. To Miss ——. With a book 295

XII. To John Richmond.—Feb. 17. 1786. His poetical progress 296

PAGE

† XIII. To John Kennedy.—March 3, 1786. With a poetical invitation 298

† XIV. To Robert Muir. March 20, 1786. Inclosing his 'Scotch Drink' 299

† XV. To Robert Aikin.—April 3, 1786. Acknowledgment of kindness 300

XVI. To Mr M'Whinnie.—April 17, 1786. With copies of his prospectus 301

† XVII. To Robert Muir. Inclosing his poem of the 'Calf' 301

† XVIII. To John Kennedy.—April 20, 1786. Inclosing the 'Mountain Daisy' 302

† XIX. To John Kennedy.—May 17, 1786. Inclosing a copy of the 'Epistle to Rankine' 303

XX. To James Smith.—Mossgiel, 1786. The delay of his voyage to the West Indies 303

XXI. To David Brice.—June 12, 1786. Distress regarding Jean Armour—printing his poems . . 304

XXII. To Robert Aikin.—Ayrshire, 1786. Perplexity of mind 306

† XXIII. To John Ballantyne.—June, 1786. Aikin's coldness—The destruction of his marriage lines . . 309

† XXIV. To John Richmond.—July 9, 1786. Armour's unkindness 310

† XXV. To David Brice.—July 17, 1786. Jean Armour —West Indies 310

† XXVI. Poetical promise to attend a party . . 311

† XXVII. To John Richmond.—July 30, 1786. Prospect of immediate departure for Jamaica 312

XXVIII. To Mrs Dunlop.—July, 1786. Thanks for her notice—Sir William Wallace 313

† XXIX. To John Kennedy.—Aug., 1786. Publication of his poems 314

XXX. To Miss Alexander.—Nov. 18, 1786. Inclosing the 'Lass of Ballochmyle' 315

XXXI. To Mrs Stewart, of Stair.—Nov., 1786. With various songs 317

† XXXII. To Robert Muir.—Nov. 18, 1786. 'Tam Samson' 318

XXXIII. Proclamation in the name of the Muses . . 319

PAGE

XXXIV. To Dr Mackenzie.—Nov. 1786. On dining with Lord Daer 321

XXXV. To Gavin Hamilton.—Dec. 7, 1786. His success —Lord Glencairn 322

XXXVI. To John Ballantyne.—Dec. 13, 1786. Account of his patrons 323

† XXXVII. To Robert Muir.—Dec. 20, 1786. On his subscribing for sixty copies of his poems . . 324

XXXVIII. To William Chalmers.—Dec. 27, 1786. A humorous sally 325

XXXIX. To the Earl of Eglinton.—Jan. 1787. Acknowledgment of his patronage 326

XL. To John Ballantyne.—Jan. 14, 1787. Lease of a farm—Grand Lodge of Scotland 327

XLI. To John Ballantyne.—Jan. 1787. Inclosing 'Bonnie Doon,' 328

XLII. To Mrs Dunlop.—Jan. 15. 1787. The novelty of his situation 329

XLIII. To Dr Moore.—Jan. 1787. Thanks for his notice 331

XLIV. To Rev. G. Lawrie.—Feb. 5, 1787. Thanks for his friendly hints—Blacklock—Mackenzie . . 334

XLV. To Dr Moore.—Feb. 15, 1787. Answer to his former letter 335

XLVI. To John Ballantyne.—Feb. 24, 1787. His portrait, engraved by Beugo after Nasmyth . . . 337

XLVII. To the Earl of Glencairn.—Feb. 1787. Asking leave to publish some complimentary stanzas . 338

XLVIII. To the Earl of Buchan.—In reply to his letter of advice 339

XLIX. To James Candlish.—March 21, 1787. Infidelity abandoned 341

L. To ——.—March 1787. On Fergusson's head-stone . 342

LI. To Mrs Dunlop.—March 22, 1787. On his departure from Edinburgh, and prospects in life . . . 345

SONGS.

THE TITHER MORN.*

To a Highland Air.

THE tither morn,
When I forlorn,
Aneath an aik sat moaning,
I did na trow,
I'd see my Jo,
Beside me gain the gloaming.
But he sae trig,
Lap o'er the rig,
And dawtingly did cheer me,
When I, what reck,
Did least expec',
To see my lad so near me.

His bonnet he,
A thought ajee,
Cock'd sprush when first he clasp'd me;
And I, I wat,
Wi' fainness grat,
While in his grips he press'd me.

* This song was first published in the Museum. "The tune," says Burns, "is originally from the Highlands; I have heard a Gaelic song to it which I was told was clever, but not by any means a lady's song."—M.

Deil tak' the war!
I late and air,
Hae wish'd since Jock departed;
But now as glad
I'm wi' my lad,
As short syne broken-hearted.

Fu' aft at e'en
Wi' dancing keen,
When a' were blythe and merry,
I car'd na by
Sae sad was I
In absence o' my dearie.
But, praise be blest,
My mind's at rest,
I'm happy wi' my Johnny;
At kirk and fair,
I'se aye be there,
And be as canty's ony.

O SAW YE MY DEARIE.

Tune—"Eppie Macnab."

O saw ye my dearie, my Eppie M'Nab?
O saw ye my dearie, my Eppie M'Nab?
She's down in the yard, she's kissin' the laird,
She winna come hame to her ain Jock Rab.
O come thy ways to me, my Eppie M'Nab!
O come thy ways to me, my Eppie M'Nab!
Whate'er thou hast done, be it late, be it soon,
Thou's welcome again to thy ain Jock Rab.

What says she, my dearie, my Eppie M'Nab?
What says she, my dearie, my Eppie M'Nab?

She lets thee to wot, that she has thee forgot,
And for ever disowns thee, her ain Jock Rab.
O had I ne'er seen thee, my Eppie M'Nab!
O had I ne'er seen thee, my Eppie M'Nab!
As light as the air, and fause as thou's fair,
Thou's broken the heart o' thy ain Jock Rab.

THE COOPER O' CUDDIE.*

Tune—"Bab at the bowster."

The cooper o' Cuddie cam' here awa,
And ca'd the girrs out owre us a'—
And our gude wife has gotten a ca'
That anger'd the silly gude-man, O.
We'll hide the cooper behind the door,
Behind the door, behind the door;
We'll hide the cooper behind the door,
And cover him under a mawn, O.

He sought them out, he sought them in,
Wi', deil hae her! and, deil hae him!
But the body was sae doited and blin',
He wist na where he was gaun, O.

They cooper'd at e'en, they cooper'd at morn,
'Till our gude-man has gotten the scorn;
On ilka brow she's planted a horn,
And swears that they shall stan', O.
We'll hide the cooper behind the door,
Behind the door, behind the door;
We'll hide the cooper behind the door,
And cover him under a mawn, O.

* In this song Burns did little more than prune it a little of its indelicacy. Even as it stands it is more witty than decorous. —M.

LOVELY POLLY STEWART.

Tune—"Ye're welcome, Charlie Stewart."

O LOVELY Polly Stewart!
O charming Polly Stewart!
There's not a flower that blooms in May
That's half so fair as thou art.
The flower it blaws, it fades and fa's,
And art can ne'er renew it;
But worth and truth eternal youth
Will give to Polly Stewart.

May he whose arms shall fauld thy charms
Possess a leal and true heart;
To him be given to ken the heaven
He grasps in Polly Stewart.
O lovely Polly Stewart!
O charming Polly Stewart!
There's ne'er a flower that blooms in May
That's half so sweet as thou art.

THE HIGHLAND LADDIE.*

Tune—"If thou'lt play me fair play."

THE bonniest lad that e'er I saw,
Bonnie laddie, Highland laddie;
Wore a plaid, and was fu' braw,
Bonnie Highland laddie.
On his head a bonnet blue,
Bonnie laddie, Highland laddie;

* A long ditty, entitled the "Highland Lad and the Lowland Lassie," was the basis of this song. Burns compressed it within singing dimensions.—M.

His loyal heart was firm and true,
Bonnie Highland laddie.

Trumpets sound, and cannons roar,
Bonnie lassie, Lowland lassie;
And a' the hills wi' echoes roar,
Bonnie Lowland lassie.
Glory, honour, now invite,
Bonnie lassie, Lowland lassie,
For freedom and my king to fight,
Bonnie Lowland lassie.

The sun a backward course shall take,
Bonnie laddie, Highland laddie,
Ere aught thy manly courage shake,
Bonnie Highland laddie.
Go, for yourself procure renown,
Bonnie laddie, Highland laddie.
And for your lawful king, his crown,
Bonnie Highland laddie.

LOVELY DAVIES.

Tune—"Miss Muir."

O how shall I, unskilfu', try
The poet's occupation,
The tunefu' powers, in happy hours,
That whisper inspiration?
Even they maun dare an effort mair,
Than aught they ever gave us,
Or they rehearse, in equal verse,
The charms o' lovely Davies.

Each eye it cheers, when she appears,
Like Phœbus in the morning,

When past the shower and ev'ry flower,
The garden is adorning.
As the wretch looks o'er Siberia's shore,
When winter-bound the wave is;
Sae droops our heart when we maun part
Frae charming lovely Davies.

Her smile's a gift, frae 'boon the lift,
That make's us mair than princes;
A scepter'd hand, a king's command,
Is in her darting glances:
The man in arms, 'gainst female charms,
Even he her willing slave is;
He hugs his chain, and owns the reign
Of conquering, lovely Davies.

My muse to dream of such a theme,
Her feeble pow'rs surrenders;
The eagle's gaze alone surveys
The sun's meridian splendours:
I wad in vain essay the strain,
The deed too daring brave is;
I'll drap the lyre, and mute admire
The charms o' lovely Davies.

NITHSDALE'S WELCOME HAME.

The noble Maxwells and their powers
Are coming o'er the border,
And they'll gae bigg Terreagle's towers,
And set them a' in order.
And they declare Terreagle's fair,
For their abode they choose it;
There's no a heart in a' the land,
But's lighter at the news o't.

Tho' stars in skies may disappear,
And angry tempests gather;
The happy hour may soon be near
That brings us pleasant weather:
The weary night o' care and grief
May hae a joyful morrow;
So dawning day has brought relief—
Fareweel our night o' sorrow!

AS I WAS A-WANDERING.

Tune—"Rinn Meudial mo Mhealladh."

As I was a-wand'ring ae midsummer e'enin',
The pipers and youngsters were making their game;
Amang them I spied my faithless fause lover,
Which bled a' the wounds o' my dolour again.
Weel, since he has left me, may pleasure gae wi' him;
I may be distress'd, but I winna complain;
I flatter my fancy I may get anither,
My heart it shall never be broken for ane.

I couldna get sleeping till dawin for greetin',
The tears trickled down like the hail and the rain;
Had I na got greetin', my heart wad a broken,
For, oh! love forsaken's a tormenting pain.
Weel, since he has left me, may pleasure gae wi' him;
I may be distress'd, but I winna complain;
I flatter my fancy I may get anither,
My heart it shall never be broken for ane.

Although he has left me for greed o' the siller,
I dinna envy him the gains he can win;
I rather wad bear a' the lade o' my sorrow
Than ever hae acted sae faithless to him.

Weel, since he has left me, may pleasure gae wi' him ;
I may be distress'd, but I winna complain ;
I flatter my fancy I may get anither,
My heart it shall never be broken for ane.

IT IS NA, JEAN, THY BONNIE FACE.*

Tune—"The Maid's complaint."

It is na, Jean, thy bonnie face,
Nor shape that I admire,
Altho' thy beauty and thy grace
Might weel awake desire.
Something, in ilka part o' thee,
To praise, to love, I find ;
But dear as is thy form to me,
Still dearer is thy mind.

Nae mair ungen'rous wish I hae,
Nor stronger in my breast,
Than if I canna mak thee sae,
At least to see thee blest.
Content am I, if heaven shall give
But happiness to thee :
And as wi' thee I'd wish to live,
For thee I'd bear to die.

* Upon these verses, which were originally English, Burns only bestowed a Scottish dress, imbuing it at the same time with a portion of his own individual feelings.—M.

THE LASS OF ECCLEFECHAN.*

Tune—"Jacky Latin."

O GAT ye me, O gat ye me,
O gat ye me wi' naething?
Rock and reel and spinning wheel,
A mickle quarter basin.
Bye attour, my gutcher has
A hiech house and a laigh ane,
A' forbye my bonnie sel',
The toss of Ecclefechan,

O haud your tongue now, Luckie Laing,
O haud your tongue and jauner;
I held the gate till you I met,
Syne I began to wander:
I tint my whistle and my sang,
I tint my peace and pleasure;
But your green graff, now, Luckie Laing,
Wad airt me to my treasure.

* To those curious in snatches of our ancient Caledonian Muse, it may not be unacceptable to present them with the original words of the air to which Burns has attached the above words:

Bonnie Jockie, braw Jockie,
Bonnie Jockie Latin,
His skin was like the silk sae fine,
And mine was like the satin.

Bonnie Jockie, braw Jockie,
Bonnie Jockie Latin,
Because she wudna gie'm a kiss,
His heart was at the breakin'.
Bonnie Jockie, &c.

Jockie Latin's gotten a wife,
He kentna how to guide her;
He put a saddle on her back,
And bade the devil ride her.
Bonnie Jockie, &c. M.

CA' THE EWES.*

Tune—"Ca' the Ewes to the Knowes."

CHORUS.

Ca' the ewes to the knowes,
Ca' them whare the heather grows,
Ca' them whare the burnie rowes,
My bonnie dearie!

As I gaed down the water-side,
There I met my shepherd lad,
He row'd me sweetly in his plaid,
And he ca'd me his dearie.

Will ye gang down the water-side,
And see the waves sae sweetly glide,
Beneath the hazels spreading wide?
The moon it shines fu' clearly.

I was bred up at nae sic school,
My shepherd lad, to play the fool,
And a' the day to sit in dool,
And naebody to see me.

Ye sall get gowns and ribbons meet,
Cauf-leather shoon upon your feet,
And in my arms ye'se lie and sleep,
And ye sall be my dearie.

If ye'll but stand to what ye've said,
I'se gang wi' you, my shepherd lad,

* This old song was considerably altered and improved by Burns for the Museum. The last stanza is entirely his.—M.

And ye may rowe me in your plaid,
And I sall be your dearie.

While waters wimple to the sea,
While day blinks in the lift sae hie,
Till clay-cauld death sall blin' my e'e,
Ye sall be my dearie.
Ca' the ewes to the knowes,
Ca' them whare the heather grows,
Ca' them whare the burnie rowes,
My bonnie dearie!

MERRY HAE I BEEN TEETHIN' A HECKLE.

Tune—"Lord Breadalbane's March."

O MERRY hae I been teethin' a heckle,
And merry hae I been shapin' a spoon;
O merry hae I been cloutin' a kettle,
And kissin' my Katie when a' was done.
O a' the lang day I ca' at my hammer,
And a' the lang day I whistle and sing,
A' the lang night I cuddle my kimmer,
And a' the lang night as happy's a king.

Bitter in dool I lickit my winnins,
O' marrying Bess, to gie her a slave:
Blest be the hour she cool'd in her linens,
And blithe be the bird that sings on her grave.
Come to my arms, my Katie, my Katie,
And come to my arms and kiss me again!
Drunken or sober, here's to thee, Katie!
And blest be the day I did it again.

FRAE THE FRIENDS AND LAND I LOVE.*

Tune—"Carron Side."

Frae the friends and land I love
Driv'n by fortune's felly spite,
Frae my best belov'd I rove,
Never mair to taste delight;
Never mair maun hope to find
Ease frae toil, relief frae care;
When remembrance wracks the mind,
Pleasures but unveil despair.

Brightest climes shall mirk appear,
Desert ilka blooming shore,
Till the fates, nae mair severe,
Friendship, love, and peace restore;
Till Revenge, wi' laurell'd head,
Bring our banish'd hame again;
And ilk loyal bonnie lad
Cross the seas and win his ain.

OUR THRISSLES FLOURISHED.†

Tune—"Awa, Whigs, awa."

CHORUS.

Awa, Whigs, awa!
Awa, Whigs, awa!
Ye're but a pack o' traitor louns,
Ye'll do nae good at a'.

* Though Burns, in his notes on the Museum, only claims the last four lines of this Jacobite song, there can be little doubt that he wrote the whole of it.—M.

† This Jacobite song owes some of its bitterest touches to the pen of Burns.—M.

Our thrissles flourish'd fresh and fair,
And bonnie bloom'd our roses;
But Whigs came like a frost in June,
And wither'd a' our posies.

Our ancient crown's fa'n in the dust—
Deil blin' them wi' the stour o't;
And write their name in his black beuk,
Wha gae the Whigs the power o't.

Our sad decay in church and state
Surpasses my descriving;
The Whigs came o'er us for a curse,
And we hae done wi' thriving.

Grim vengeance lang has ta'en a nap,
But we may see him wauken;
Gude help the day when royal heads
Are hunted like a maukin.
Awa, Whigs, awa!
Awa, Whigs, awa!
Ye're but a pack o' traitor louns,
Ye'll do nae guid at a'.

WHERE HAE YE BEEN.

Tune—"Killicrankie."

Where hae ye been sae braw, lad?
Where hae ye been sae brankie, O?
O, where hae ye been sae braw, lad?
Cam ye by Killicrankie, O?
An ye had been where I hae been,
Ye wadna been sae cantie, O;
An ye had seen what I hae seen,
On the braes o' Killicrankie, O.

I fought at land, I fought at sea ;
At hame I fought my auntie, O ;
But I met the devil and Dundee,
On the braes o' Killicrankie, O.
The bauld Pitcur fell in a furr,
And Clavers got a clankie, O ;
Or I had fed an Athole gled
On the braes o' Killicrankie, O.

O GUDE ALE COMES.*

O GUDE ale comes and gude ale goes
Gude ale gars me sell my hose,
Sell my hose, and pawn my shoon,
Gude ale keeps my heart aboon.
I had sax owsen in a pleugh,
They drew a' weel eneugh ;
I sell'd them a' just ane by ane,
Gude ale keeps my heart aboon.

Gude ale hauds me bare and busy,
Gars me moop wi' the servant hizzie
Stand i' the stool when I hae done,
Gude ale keeps my heart aboon.
O gude ale comes and gude ale goes,
Gude ale gars me sell my hose,
Sell my hose, and pawn my shoon,
Gude ale keeps my heart aboon.

* Burns made only a few slight verbal emendations on this old song, to suit it for publication in the Museum.—M.

SIMMER'S A PLEASANT TIME.

Tune—"Aye waukin O."

Simmer's a pleasant time,
Flow'rs of ev'ry colour;
The water rins o'er the heugh,
And I long for my true lover.
Aye waukin O,
Waukin still and wearie:
Sleep I can get nane
For thinking on my dearie.

When I sleep I dream,
When I wauk I'm eerie;
Sleep I can get nane
For thinking on my dearie.

Lanely night comes on
A' the lave are sleepin';
I think on my bonnie lad,
And I bleer my een with greetin'.
Aye waukin O,
Waukin still and wearie:
Sleep I can get nane
For thinking on my dearie.

JAMIE, COME TRY ME.

Tune—"Jamie, come try me."

CHORUS.

Jamie, come try me,
Jamie, come try me;
If thou would win my love,
Jamie, come try me.

If thou should ask my love,
Could I deny thee?
If thou would win my love,
Jamie, come try me.

If thou should kiss me, love,
Wha could espy thee?
If thou wad be my love,
Jamie, come try me.
Jamie, come try me,
Jamie, come try me;
If thou would win my love,
Jamie, come try me.

THE CAPTAIN'S LADY.*

Tune—"O mount and go."

CHORUS.

O mount and go,
Mount and make you ready;
O mount and go,
And be the captain's lady.

When the drums do beat,
And the cannons rattle,
Thou shalt sit in state,
And see thy love in battle.

When the vanquish'd foe
Sues for peace and quiet,
To the shades we'll go,
And in love enjoy it.

* This is ascribed to Burns by Mr Cromek, who found it in the poet's handwriting among the papers of Johnson, the publisher of the Museum. Burns never acknowledged it.—M.

O mount and go,
Mount and make you ready:
O mount and go,
And be the captain's lady.

BEWARE O' BONNIE ANN.*

Tune—"Ye gallants bright."

Ye gallants bright, I red ye right,
Beware o' bonnie Ann;
Her comely face, sae fu' o' grace,
Your heart she will trepan.
Her een sae bright, like stars by night,
Her skin is like the swan;
Sae jimply laced her genty waist,
That sweetly ye might span.

Youth, grace, and love attendant move
And pleasure leads the van;
In a' their charms and conquering arms,
They wait on bonnie Ann.
The captive bands may chain the hands,
But love enslaves the man;
Ye gallants braw, I red ye a'
Beware o' bonnie Ann.

* The heroine of this song was Ann Masterton, daughter of Allan Masterton, one of the poet's steadfast friends, and author of the air of Strathallan's Lament.—M.

AS I CAME IN BY OUR GATE END.

As I came in by our gate end,
As day was waxin' weary,
O wha cam tripping down the street
But bonnie Peg, my dearie!

Her air sae sweet, and shape complete,
Wi' nae proportion wanting,
The queen of love did never move
Wi' motion mair enchanting.

Wi' linked hands, we took the sands
A-down yon winding river;
And, oh! that hour and broomy bower,
Can I forget it ever?

WEE WILLIE GRAY.

Wee Willie Gray, and his leather wallet;
Peel a willie wand to be him boots and jacket;
The rose upon the brier will be him trouse and doublet,
The rose upon the brier will be him trouse and doublet.

Wee Willie Gray, and his leather wallet,
Twice a lily-flower will be him sark and cravat;
Feathers of a flee wad feather up his bonnet,
Feathers of a flee wad feather up his bonnet.

AE DAY A BRAW WOOER.*

Tune—"The Lothian Lassie."

Ae day a braw wooer came down the lang glen,
And sair wi' his love he did deave me;
But I said there was naething I hated like men,
The deuce gae wi' him to believe me, believe me,
The deuce gae wi' him to believe me.

A well stocket mailen, himsel o't the laird,
And bridal affhand was the proffer;
I never loot on that I kenn'd or I car'd,
But I thought I might get a waur offer, waur offer,
But thought I might get a waur offer.

He spak o' the darts o' my bonny black een,
And O for my love he was deein';
I said he might die when he liked for Jean,
The Gude forgie me for liein', for liein',
The Gude forgie me for liein'.

But what do you think? in a fortnight or less,
The deil's in his taste to gae near her,
He's down to the castle to black cousin Bess,
Think how the jade I could endure her, endure her,
Think how the jade I could endure her?

And a' the niest week as I fretted wi' care,
I gaed to the tryst o' Dulgarlock;
And wha but my braw fickle wooer was there,
Wha glower'd as if he'd seen a warlock, a warlock,
Wha glower'd as if he'd seen a warlock.

* This is the set of the song which Burns sent to the 'Museum;' but he afterwards made some verbal emendations on it, and sent it to Thomson's work.—M.

Out ower my left shouther I gied him a blink,
Lest neighbours should think I was saucy;
My wooer he caper'd as he'd been in drink,
And vow'd that I was a dear lassie, dear lassie,
And vow'd that I was a dear lassie.

I speir'd for my cousin, fu' couthie and sweet,
And if she'd recover'd her hearin';
And how my auld shoon fitted her shachel'd feet;
Gude save us how he fell a swearin, a swearin,
Gude save us how he fell a swearin.

He begg'd me for gudesake, that I'd be his wife,
Or else I wad kill him wi' sorrow;
And just to preserve the poor body in life,
I think I will wed him to-morrow, to-morrow,
I think I will wed him to-morrow.

GUDE E'EN TO YOU, KIMMER.*

Tune—"We're a' noddin."

Gude e'en to you, kimmer,
And how do ye do?
Hiccup, quo' kimmer,
The better that I'm fou.
We're a' noddin, nid, nid, noddin,
We're a' noddin at our house at hame.
We're a' noddin, nid, nid, noddin,
We're a' noddin at our house at hame.

* This is an old song, which Burns trimmed up for the 'Museum,' where it was first published.—M.

Kate sits i' the neuk
Suppin' hen-broo;
Deil tak Kate
An she be na noddin too!
We're a' noddin, &c.

How's a' wi' you, kimmer,
And how do ye fare?
A pint o' the best o't,
And twa pints mair.
We're a' noddin, &c.

How's a' wi' you, kimmer,
And how do ye thrive?
How mony bairns hae ye?
Quo' kimmer, I hae five.
We're a' noddin, &c.

Are they a' Johnny's?
Eh! atweel na;
Twa o' them were gotten
When Johnny was awa.
We're a' noddin, &c.

Cats like milk
And dogs like broo:
Lads like lasses weel,
And lasses lads too
We're a' noddin, &c.

SCROGGAM.*

THERE was a wife wonn'd in Cockpen,
Scroggam;
She brew'd gude ale for gentlemen;
Sing auld Cowl, lay you down by me,
Scroggam, my dearie, ruffum.

The guidwife's dochter fell in a fever,
Scroggam;
The priest o' the parish fell in anither,
Sing auld Cowl, lay you down by me,
Scroggam, my dearie, ruffum.

They laid the twa i' the bed thegither,
Scroggam;
That the heat o' the tane might cool the tither,
Sing auld Cowl, lay you down by me,
Scroggam, my dearie, ruffum.

ROBIN SHURE IN HAIRST.

CHORUS.

Robin shure in hairst,
I shure wi' him;
Fient a heuk had I,
Yet I stack by him.

I GAED up to Dunse
To warp a wab o' plaiden;
At his daddie's yett
Wha met me but Robin.

* This is ascribed to Burns in the 'Museum,' vol. 5.

Was na Robin bauld,
Tho' I was a cotter,
Play'd me sic a trick,
And me the elder's dochter?
Robin shure, &c.

Robin promis'd me
A' my winter vittle;
Fient haet he had but three
Goose feathers and a whittle.
Robin shure, &c.

MEG O' THE MILL.*

Tune—"O bonny Lass, will you lie in a barracks."

O KEN ye what Meg o' the mill has gotten,
And ken ye what Meg o' the mill has gotten?
A braw new naig wi' the tail o' a rottan,
And that's what Meg o' the mill has gotten.
O ken ye what Meg o' the mill lo'es dearly,
And ken ye what Meg o' the mill lo'es dearly?
A dram o' gude strunt in a morning early,
And that's what Meg o' the mill lo'es dearly.

O ken ye how Meg o' the mill was married,
And ken ye how Meg o' the mill was married?
The priest he was oxter'd, the clerk he was carried,
And that's how Meg o' the mill was married.
O ken ye how Meg o' the mill was bedded,
And ken ye how Meg o' the mill was bedded?

* This is founded on an old ditty which the poet altered and trimmed up for Johnson's 'Musical Museum.' Another version of it he subsequently furnished to Mr Thomson, which will be given in his correspondence with that gentleman.—M.

The groom gat sae fou, he fell twafauld beside it,
And that's how Meg o' the mill was bedded.

THERE'S NEWS, LASSES, NEWS.

THERE's news, lasses, news,
Guid news I've to tell,
There's a boatfu' o' lads
Come to our town to sell.
The wean wants a cradle,
And the cradle wants a cod;
And I'll no gang to my bed
Until I get a nod.

Father, quo' she, mither, quo' she,
Do what ye can,
I'll no gang to my bed,
Till I get a man.
The wean wants a cradle,
And the cradle wants a cod;
And I'll no gang to my bed,
Until I get a nod.

I hae as guid a craft rig
As made o' yird and stane;
And waly fa' the ley-crap,
For I maun till'd again.
The wean wants a cradle,
And the cradle wants a cod;
And I'll no gang to my bed
Until I get a nod.

O THAT I HAD NE'ER BEEN MARRIED.

O THAT I had ne'er been married,
I wad never had nae care;
Now I've gotten wife and bairns,
And they cry crowdie evermair.
Ance crowdie, twice crowdie,
Three times crowdie in a day,
Gin ye crowdie ony mair,
Ye'll crowdie a' my meal away.

Waefu' want and hunger fley me,
Glowrin' by the hallan en';
Sair I fecht them at the door,
But aye I'm eerie they come ben.
Ance crowdie, twice crowdie,
Three times crowdie in a day;
Gin ye crowdie ony mair,
Ye'll crowdie a' my meal away.

BUT LATELY SEEN.

Tune—"The winter of life."

BUT lately seen in gladsome green,
The woods rejoiced the day;
Thro' gentle showers the laughing flowers,
In double pride were gay:
But now our joys are fled
On winter blasts awa!
Yet maiden May, in rich array,
Again shall bring them a'.

But my white pow, nae kindly thowe,
Shall melt the snaws of age;

My trunk of eild, but buss or bield,
Sinks in Time's wintry rage.
Oh! age has weary days,
And nights o' sleepless pain!
Thou golden time o' youthfu' prime,
Why comes thou not again?

COULD AUGHT OF SONG.

Tune—"Could aught of song."

Could aught of song declare my pains,
Could artful numbers move thee,
The muse should tell, in labour'd strains,
O Mary, how I love thee!
They who but feign a wounded heart,
May teach the lyre to languish;
But what avails the pride of art,
When wastes the soul with anguish?

Then let the sudden bursting sigh,
The heart-felt pang discover;
And in the keen, yet tender eye,
O read th' imploring lover.
For well I know thy gentle mind
Disdains art's gay disguising;
Beyond what fancy e'er refin'd,
The voice of nature prizing.

HERE'S TO THY HEALTH.

Tune—"Laggan Burn."

Here's to thy health, my bonnie lass,
Gude night and joy be wi' thee;
I'll come nae mair to thy bower-door,
To tell thee that I lo'e thee.
O dinna think, my pretty pink,
But I can live without thee:
I vow and swear I dinna care
How lang ye look about ye.

Thou'rt aye sae free informing me
Thou hast nae mind to marry;
I'll be as free informing thee
Nae time hae I to tarry.
I ken thy friends try ilka means,
Frae wedlock to delay thee,
Depending on some higher chance—
But fortune may betray thee.

I ken they scorn my low estate,
But that does never grieve me;
But I'm as free as any he,
Sma' siller will relieve me.
I count my health my greatest wealth,
Sae long as I'll enjoy it:
I'll fear nae scant, I'll bode na want,
As lang's I get employment.

But far off fowls hae feathers fair,
And aye until ye try them:
Tho' they seem fair, still have a care,
They may prove waur than I am.

But at twal at night, when the moon shines bright,
My dear I'll come and see thee;
For the man that lo'es his mistress weel
Nae travel makes him weary.

O STEER HER UP.

Tune—"O steer her up, and haud her gaun."

O STEER her up, and haud her gaun,—
Her mother's at the mill, jo;
And gin she winna take a man,
E'en let her take her will, jo:
First shore her wi' a kindly kiss,
And ca' anither gill, jo,
And gin she take the thing amiss,
E'en let her flyte her fill, jo.

O steer her up, and be na blate,
And gin she take it ill, jo,
Then lea'e the lassie till her fate,
And time nae langer spill, jo:
Ne'er break your heart for ae rebut,
But think upon it still, jo;
Then gin the lassie winna do't,
Ye'll fin' anither will, jo.

O AYE MY WIFE SHE DANG ME.*

Tune—"My wife she dang me."

O AYE my wife she dang me,
And aft my wife did bang me;
If ye gie a woman a' her will,
Gude faith, she'll soon o'ergang ye.
On peace and rest my mind was bent,
And fool I was I married;
But never honest man's intent
As cursedly miscarried.

* When Burns wrote the above, he had probably in his recollection the old words to which the air was originally united.

I was twenty years a bachelor,
And lived a single life;
But I never could contented be
Until I got a wife.
But I hadna lang married been
Till she began to bang me,
And near dang out my very een,
And sware she would gae hang me.

Ae day I at a wedding was
And dancing on the green;
I laid my hands on a kent lass,
Said, hail ye dainty quean.
Up comes my wife in a crack,
And on the flure she dang me,
And for a lick o' the grey mare pock,
She sware that she would hang me.

But when I did get up again,
Then fast awa ran I;
My wife she chas'd me owre the plain
Wi' mony a hue and cry.
But I soon tipped her the wink,
And said nae mair ye'se bang me,
I'll drink nae mair o' your sour drink
For fear at last ye hang me. M.

Some sairie comfort still at last,
When a' their days are done, man;
My pains o' hell on earth are past,
I'm sure o' bliss aboon, man.
O aye my wife she dang me,
And aft my wife did bang me;
If ye gie a woman a' her will,
Gude faith, she'll soon o'ergang ye.

OH, WERT THOU IN THE CAULD BLAST.

Tune—"Lass o' Livistone."

Oh, wert thou in the cauld blast,
On yonder lea, on yonder lea,
My plaidie to the angry airt,
I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee:
Or did misfortune's bitter storms
Around thee blaw, around thee blaw,
Thy bield should be my bosom,
To share it a', to share it a'.

Or were I in the wildest waste,
Sae black and bare, sae black and bare,
The desert were a paradise,
If thou wert there, if thou wert there:
Or were I monarch o' the globe,
Wi' thee to reign, wi' thee to reign,
The brightest jewel in my crown
Wad be my queen, wad be my queen

O WHA IS SHE THAT LO'ES ME.

Tune—"Morag."

O WHA is she that lo'es me,
And has my heart a-keeping?
O sweet is she that lo'es me,
As dews o' simmer weeping,
In tears the rose-buds steeping!
O that's the lassie o' my heart,
My lassie ever dearer;
O that's the queen of womankind,
And ne'er a ane to peer her.

If thou shalt meet a lassie
In grace and beauty charming,
That e'en thy chosen lassie,
Erewhile thy breast sae warming,
Had ne'er sic powers alarming;
O that's the lassie o' my heart,
My lassie ever dearer;
O that's the queen o' womankind,
And ne'er a ane to peer her.

If thou hadst heard her talking,
And thy attentions plighted,
That ilka body talking,
But her by thee is slighted,
And thou art all delighted;
O that's the lassie o' my heart,
My lassie ever dearer;
O that's the queen o' womankind,
And ne'er a ane to peer her

If thou hast met this fair one;
When frae her thou hast parted,

If every other fair one,
But her, thou hast deserted,
And thou art broken-hearted;
O that's the lassie o' my heart,
My lassie ever dearer;
O that's the queen o' womankind,
And ne'er a ane to peer her.

O LAY THY LOOF IN MINE, LASS.

Tune—"Cordwainer's March."

O LAY thy loof in mine, lass,
In mine, lass, in mine, lass;
And swear on thy white hand, lass,
That thou wilt be my ain.
A slave to love's unbounded sway,
He aft has wrought me meikle wae;
But now he is my deadly fae,
Unless thou be my ain.

There's monie a lass has broke my rest,
That for a blink I hae lo'ed best;
But thou art queen within my breast,
For ever to remain.
O lay thy loof in mine, lass,
In mine, lass, in mine, lass;
And swear on thy white hand, lass,
That thou wilt be my ain.

O WHA WILL TO SAINT STEPHEN'S HOUSE.*

Tune—"Killicrankie."

O WHA will to Saint Stephen's house,
To do our errands there, man?
O wha will to Saint Stephen's house,
O' th' merry lads o' Ayr, man?
Or will we send a man-o'-law?
Or will we send a sodger?
Or him wha led o'er Scotland a'
The meikle Ursa-Major?

Come, will ye court a noble lord,
Or buy a score o' lairds, man?
For worth and honour pawn their word,
Their vote shall be Glencaird's, man?
Ane gies them coin, ane gies them wine,
Anither gies them clatter;
Anbank, wha guess'd the ladies' taste,
He gies a Fête Champetre.

* "The occasion of this ballad was as follows:—When Mr Cunninghame of Enterkin came to his estate, two mansion-houses on it—Enterkin and Annbank—were both in a ruinous state. Wishing to introduce himself with some *eclat* to the country, he got temporary erections made on the banks of Ayr, tastefully decorated with shrubs and flowers, for a supper and ball, to which most of the respectable families in the county were invited. It was a novelty in the county, and attracted much notice. A dissolution of parliament was soon expected, and the festivity was thought to be an introduction to a canvass for representing the county. Several other candidates were spoken of, particularly Sir John Whitefoord, then residing at Cloncaird, commonly pronounced Glencaird, and Mr Boswell, the well known biographer of Dr Johnson. The political views of the festive assemblage which are alluded to in the ballad, if they ever existed, were however laid aside, as Mr C. did not canvass the county."—*Gilbert Burns.*

When love and beauty heard the news,
  The gay green-woods amang, man;
Where gathering flowers and busking bowers
  They heard the blackbird's sang, man:
A vow, they seal'd it with a kiss,
  Sir Politics to fetter,
As theirs alone, the patent-bliss,
  To hold a Fête Champetre.

Then mounted Mirth, on gleesome wing,
  O'er hill and dale she flew, man;
Ilk wimpling burn, ilk crystal spring,
  Ilk glen and shaw she knew, man;
She summon'd every social sprite,
  That sports by wood or water,
On th' bonny banks o' Ayr to meet,
  And keep this Fête Champetre.

Cauld Boreas, wi' his boisterous crew,
  Were bound to stakes like kye, man;
And Cynthia's car, o' silver fu',
  Clamb up the starry sky, man;
Reflected beams dwell in the streams,
  Or down the current shatter;
The western breeze steals thro' the trees,
  To view this Fête Champetre.

How many a robe sae gaily floats!
  What sparkling jewels glance, man!
To Harmony's enchanting notes,
  As moves the mazy dance, man.
The echoing wood, the winding flood,
  Like Paradise did glitter,
When angels met, at Adam's yett,
  To hold their Fête Champetre.

When Politics came there, to mix
  And make his ether-stane, man!

He circled round the magic ground,
But entrance found he nane, man:
He blushed for shame, he quat his name,
Forswore it, every letter,
Wi' humble prayer to join and share
This festive Fête Champetre.

THE HIGHLAND WIDOW'S LAMENT.*

Oh! I am come to the low countrie,
Och-on, och-on, och-rie!
Without a penny in my purse,
To buy a meal to me.

It was nae sae in the Highland hills,
Och-on, och-on, och-rie!
Nae woman in the countrie wide
Sae happy was as me.

For then I had a score o' kye,
Och-on, och-on, och-rie!
Feeding on yon hills so high,
And giving milk to me.

And there I had three score o' yowes,
Och-on, och-on, och-rie!
Skipping on yon bonnie knowes,
And casting woo' to me.

I was the happiest of a' the clan,
Sair, sair may I repine;
For Donald was the brawest lad,
And Donald he was mine.

* I do not know on what authority Mr Cunningham assigns this Jacobite song to Burns; for we have heard old ladies sing it, who remember its existence anterior to the poet's time.—M.

Till Charlie Stuart cam' at last,
Sae far to set us free;
My Donald's arm was wanted then,
For Scotland and for me.

Their waefu' fate what need I tell,
Right to the wrang did yield:
My Donald and his country fell
Upon Culloden's field.

Oh! I am come to the low countrie,
Och-on, och-on, och-rie!
Nae woman in the world wide
Sae wretched now as me.

CAULD IS THE E'ENIN' BLAST.

Tune—"Cauld is the e'enin' blast."

Cauld is the e'enin' blast
O' Boreas o'er the pool,
And dawin' it is dreary
When birks are bare at Yule.

O bitter blaws the e'enin' blast
When bitter bites the frost,
And in the mirk and dreary drift,
The hills and glens are lost.

Ne'er sae murky blew the night
That drifted o'er the hill,
But bonnie Peg-a-Ramsey
Gat grist to her mill.

THERE WAS A BONNIE LASS.

THERE was a bonnie lass,
And a bonnie, bonnie lass,
And she lo'ed her bonnie laddie dear;
Till war's loud alarms
Tore her laddie frae her arms,
Wi' mony a sigh and a tear.

Over sea, over shore,
Where the cannons loudly roar,
He still was a stranger to fear:
And nocht could him quell,
Or his bosom assail,
But the bonnie lass he lo'ed sae dear.

O MALLY'S MEEK, MALLY'S SWEET.

O MALLY'S meek, Mally's sweet,
Mally's modest and discreet,
Mally's rare, Mally's fair,
Mally's every way complete.
As I was walking up the street,
A barefit maid I chanc'd to meet;
But O the road was very hard
For that fair maiden's tender feet.

It were mair meet that those fine feet
Were weel lac'd up in silken shoon,
And 'twere more fit that she should sit
Within yon chariot gilt aboon.
O Mally's meek, &c.

Her yellow hair, beyond compare,
Comes trinkling down her swan white neck;

And her two eyes like stars in skies,
  Would keep a sinking ship frae wreck.
O Mally's meek, Mally's sweet,
  Mally's modest and discreet,
Mally's rare, Mally's fair,
  Mally's every way complete.

THE FAREWELL.*

Tune—"It was a' for our rightfu' king."

It was a' for our rightfu' king,
  We left fair Scotland's strand;
It was a' for our rightfu' king
  We e'er saw Irish land, my dear;
  We e'er saw Irish land.

* The above song is published in Johnson's 'Scots Musical Museum,' Vol. 5, but without any allusion to its being altered or improved by Burns, though Mr Cunningham, in his recent edition of the Poet's Works, assumes as much, and publishes it accordingly. In his notes to the Jacobite Reliques, the Ettrick Shepherd says, this song was written by Captain Ogilvie, who was killed on the banks of the Rhine in the year 1695. Sir Walter Scott, in his notes to Rokeby, Canto 3, acknowledges that it suggested to him the idea of his own beautiful lyric, "A weary lot is thine." We give the old song, such as it occurs in stall ballads, which was the prototype of the above.

The cold winter it is past and gone,
  And now comes on the spring,
And I am one of the king's life-guards,
  And I must go fight for my king, my dear;
  And I must go fight for my king.

Now since to the wars you must go,
  One thing I pray grant me,
It's I will dress myself in man's attire,
  And I'll travel along with thee, my dear,
  And I'll travel along with thee.

Now a' is done that men can do,
And a' is done in vain;
My love and native land farewell,
For I maun cross the main, my dear;
For I maun cross the main.

I would not for ten thousand worlds
That my love endangered were so;
The rattling of drums and shining of swords,
Will cause great sorrow and wo, my dear,
Will cause great sorrow and wo.

I will do the thing for my true love,
That she will not do for me;
It's I'll put cuffs of black on my red coat,
And mourn till the day I die, my dear,
And mourn till the day I die.

I will do more for my true love,
Than he will do for me;
I'll cut my hair and roll me bare,
And mourn till the day I die, my dear,
And mourn till the day I die.

So farewell mother and father dear,
My kith and kin also,
My sweet and bonny Mally Stewart,
You're the cause of all my wo, my dear,
You're the cause of all my wo.

When we came to bonny Stirling town,
As we lay all in tent,
By the King's orders we were all taken,
And to Germany we were all sent, my dear,
And to Germany we were all sent.

So farewell bonny Stirling town,
And the maids therein also;
And farewell bonny Mally Stewart,
You're the cause of all my wo, my dear,
You're the cause of all my wo.

She took the slippers off her feet,
And the cockups off her hair;

He turned him right, and round about
Upon the Irish shore;
And gae his bridle-reins a shake,
With adieu for evermore, my dear;
With adieu for evermore.

The sodger from the wars returns,
The sailor frae the main;
But I hae parted frae my love,
Never to meet again, my dear;
Never to meet again.

When day is gane, and night is come,
And a' folk bound to sleep;
I think on him that's far awa',
The lee-lang night, and weep, my dear;
The lee-lang night, and weep.

And she has ta'en a long journey,
For seven lang years and mair, my dear,
For seven lang years and mair.

Sometimes she rade, sometimes she gaed,
Sometimes sat down to mourn,
And it was aye the o'ercome o' her tale,
Shall I e'er see my bonny laddie return, my dear,
Shall I e'er see my bonny laddie return.

The trooper turned himself round about,
All on the Irish shore;
He has gi'en the bridle reins a shake,
Saying adieu for evermore, my dear,
Saying adieu for evermore,

LADY MARY ANN.*

Tune—"Craigton's Growing."

O, Lady Mary Ann
Looks o'er the castle wa',
She saw three bonnie boys
Playing at the ba';
The youngest he was
The flower amang them a',
My bonnie laddie's young,
But he's growin' yet.

* Burns noted the song and the air from a lady in the north country when upon his tour in that district, and communicated it to Johnson; and it must be confessed that, in so much of it as is his own, he has displayed all his accustomed taste and fine feeling. From the "Museum" Mr Finlay transplanted it into his collection of ballads, but apparently without the slightest notion of the master mind which had been at work upon it. In "The North Countrie Garland, Edinburgh, 1824," edited by Mr Maidment, advocate, we are furnished with the first version of the old ballad, accompanied with the following historical note:—"The estate of Craigstoun was acquired by John Urquhart, better known by the name of the tutor of Cromarty. It would appear that the ballad refers to his grandson, who married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Robert Innes of that ilk, and by her had one son. This John Urquhart died 30th November, 1634.—Spalding, (vol. i. p. 36,) after mentioning the great mortality in the Craigstoun family, says, 'thus in three years space, the good sire, son, and oy, died.' He adds, that 'the Laird of Innes, whose sister was married to this Urquhart of Leathers, (the father,) and not without her consent, as was thought, gets the guiding of this young boy, and without advice of friends, shortly and quietly marries him, upon his own eldest daughter Elizabeth Innes.' He mentions that young Craigstoun's death was generally attributed to melancholy, in consequence of Sir Robert Innes refusing to pay old Craigstoun's debts. The creditors bestowing 'many maledictions which touched the young man's conscience, albeit he could not mend it.' The father died in December, 1631, and the son in 1634. The marriage consequently must have been of short duration."

We subjoin a copy of it as traditionally preserved in the west of Scotland:—

O father! O father!
An ye think it fit,
We'll send him a year
To the college yet:
We'll sew a green ribbon
Round about his hat,
And that will let them ken
He's to marry yet.

MY BONNIE LADDIE'S LANG O' GROWING.

The trees they are ivied, the leaves they are green,
The days are a' awa that I hae seen,
On the cauld winter nights I ha'e to lie my lane,
For my bonnie laddie's lang o' growing.

O father dear, you have done me great wrong,
You have wedded me to a boy that's too young,
He is scarce twelve, and I'm but thirteen,
And my bonnie laddie's lang o' growing.

O daughter dear, I have done you no wrong,
I have wedded you to a noble lord's son,
He'll be the lord, and ye'll wait on,
And your bonnie laddie's daily growing.

O father dear, if you think it fit,
We'll send him to the college a year or twa yet;
We'll tie a green ribbon round about his hat,
And that will be a token that he's married.

And O father dear, if this pleaseth you,
I will cut my hair aboon my brow;
Coat, vest, and breeches I will put on,
And I to the college will go wi' him.

She's made him shirts o' the Holland sae fine,
And wi' her ain hands she sewed the same;
And aye the tears came trickling down,
Saying, my bonnie laddie's lang o' growing.

In his twelfth year he was a married man,
And in his thirteenth he had his auld son,
And in his fourteenth his grave it was green,
Sae that put an end to his growing. M.

Lady Mary Ann
  Was a flower i' the dew,
Sweet was its smell,
  And bonnie was its hue;
And the langer it blossom'd
  The sweeter it grew;
For the lily in the bud
  Will be bonnier yet.

Young Charlie Cochran
  Was the sprout of an aik;
Bonnie and bloomin'
  And straught was its make:
The sun took delight
  To shine for its sake,
And it will be the brag
  O' the forest yet.

The simmer is gane
  When the leaves they were green,
And the days are awa
  That we hae seen;
But far better days
  I trust will come again,
For my bonnie laddie's young,
  But he's growin' yet.

MY LADY'S GOWN, THERE'S GAIRS UPON'T.*

Tune—"Gregg's Pipes."

My lady's gown, there's gairs upon't,
And gowden flowers sae rare upon't;

* The air to which this song was written, part of which is anterior to the time of Burns, is said to have been the composition of James Gregg, a musician belonging to Ayrshire.—M.

But Jenny's jimps and jirkinet,
My lord thinks muckle mair upon't.
My lord a-hunting he is gane,
But hounds or hawks wi' him are nane;
By Colin's cottage lies his game,
If Colin's Jenny be at hame.

My lady's white, my lady's red,
And kith and kin o' Cassilis' blude;
But her ten-pund lands o' tocher guid
Were a' the charms his lordship lo'ed.

Out o'er yon muir, out o'er yon moss,
Whare gorcocks thro' the heather pass,
There wons auld Colin's bonnie lass,
A lily in a wilderness.

Sae sweetly moves her genty limbs,
Like music notes o' lover's hymns;
The diamond dew is her een sae blue,
Where laughing love sae wanton swims.

My lady's dink, my lady's drest,
The flower and fancy o' the west;
But the lassie that a man lo'es best,
O that's the lass to make him blest.
My lady's gown, there's gairs upon't,
And gowden flowers sae rare upon't;
But Jenny's jimps and jirkinet,
My lord thinks muckle mair upon't.

CORRESPONDENCE

WITH

MR GEORGE THOMSON.

CORRESPONDENCE, &c.

No. I.

MR THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, *September*, 1792.

SIR,

FOR some years past, I have, with a friend or two, employed many leisure hours in selecting and collating the most favourite of our national melodies for publication. We have engaged Pleyel, the most agreeable composer living, to put accompaniments to these, and also to compose an instrumental prelude and conclusion to each air, the better to fit them for concerts, both public and private. To render this work perfect, we are desirous to have the poetry improved, wherever it seems unworthy of the music; and that it is so in many instances, is allowed by every one conversant with our musical collections. The editors of these seem in general to have depended on the music proving an excuse for the verses; and hence, some charming melodies are united to mere nonsense and doggerel while others are accommodated with rhymes so loose and indelicate, as cannot be sung in decent company. To remove this reproach, would be an easy task to the author of "The Cotter's Saturday Night;" and, for the honour of Caledonia, I would fain hope he may be induced to take up the pen. If so, we shall be enabled to present the public with a collection infinitely more interesting than any that has yet appeared, and acceptable to all persons of taste, whether they wish for correct melodies, delicate accompani-

ments, or characteristic verses.—We will esteem your poetical assistance a particular favour, besides paying any reasonable price you shall please to demand for it. Profit is quite a secondary consideration with us, and we are resolved to spare neither pains nor expense on the publication. Tell me frankly, then, whether you will devote your leisure to writing twenty or twenty-five songs, suited to the particular melodies which I am prepared to send you. A few songs, exceptionable only in some of their verses, I will likewise submit to your consideration; leaving it to you, either to mend these, or make new songs in their stead. It is superfluous to assure you that I have no intention to displace any of the sterling old songs; those only will be removed, which appear quite silly, or absolutely indecent. Even these shall all be examined by Mr Burns, and if he is of opinion that any of them are deserving of the music, in such cases no divorce shall take place.

Relying on the letter accompanying this, to be forgiven for the liberty I have taken in addressing you, I am, with great esteem, Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

G. THOMSON.

No. II.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

DUMFRIES, 16*th Sept.* 1792.

SIR,

I HAVE just this moment got your letter. As the request you make to me will positively add to my enjoyments in complying with it, I shall enter into your undertaking with all the small portion of abilities I have, strained to their utmost exertion by the impulse of enthusiasm. Only, don't hurry me: "Deil tak the hindmost," is by no means the *cri de guerre* of my muse. Will you, as I am inferior to none of you in enthusiastic attachment to the poetry

and music of old Caledonia, and, since you request it, have cheerfully promised my mite of assistance—will you let me have a list of your airs, with the first line of the printed verses you intend for them, that I may have an opportunity of suggesting any alteration that may occur to me. You know 'tis in the way of my trade; still leaving you, gentlemen, the undoubted right of publishers, to approve, or reject, at your pleasure, for your own publication. Apropos! if you are for English verses, there is, on my part, an end of the matter. Whether in the simplicity of the ballad, or the pathos of the song, I can only hope to please myself in being allowed at least a sprinkling of our native tongue. English verses, particularly the works of Scotsmen, that have merit, are certainly very eligible. 'Tweedside;' 'Ah! the poor shepherd's mournful fate!' 'Ah! Chloris could I now but sit,' &c. you cannot mend; but such insipid stuff as, 'To Fanny fair could I impart,' &c. usually set to 'The Mill, Mill O,' is a disgrace to the collections in which it has already appeared, and would doubly disgrace a collection that will have the very superior merit of yours. But more of this in the farther prosecution of the business, if I am called on for my strictures and amendments—I say, amendments; for I will not alter except where I myself at least think that I amend.

As to any remuneration, you may think my songs either above or below price; for they shall absolutely be the one or the other. In the honest enthusiasm with which I embark in your undertaking, to talk of money, wages, fee, hire, &c. would be downright prostitution of soul! A proof of each of the songs that I compose or amend, I shall receive as a favour. In the rustic phrase of the season, "Gude speed the wark!"

I am, Sir, your very humble servant,
R. BURNS.

P.S. I have some particular reasons for wishing my interference to be known as little as possible.

No. III.

MR THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 13*th Oct.* 1792.

DEAR SIR,

I RECEIVED, with much satisfaction, your pleasant and obliging letter, and I return my warmest acknowledgments for the enthusiasm with which you have entered into our undertaking. We have now no doubt of being able to produce a collection highly deserving of public attention in all respects.

I agree with you in thinking English verses that have merit, very eligible, wherever new verses are necessary; because the English becomes every year more and more the language of Scotland; but if you mean that no English verses except those by Scottish authors, ought to be admitted, I am half inclined to differ from you. I should consider it unpardonable to sacrifice one good song in the Scottish dialect, to make room for English verses; but, if we can select a few excellent ones suited to the unprovided or ill-provided airs, would it not be the very bigotry of literary patriotism to reject such, merely because the authors were born south of the Tweed? Our sweet air, 'My Nannie O,' which in the collections is joined to the poorest stuff that Allan Ramsay ever wrote, beginning, 'While some for pleasure pawn their health,' answers so finely to Dr Percy's beautiful song, 'O Nancy wilt thou go with me,' that one would think he wrote it on purpose for the air. However, it is not at all our wish to confine you to English verses; you shall freely be allowed a sprinkling of your native tongue, as you elegantly express it; and moreover, we will patiently wait your own time. One thing only I beg, which is, that however gay and sportive the muse may be, she may always be decent. Let her not write what beauty would blush to speak, nor wound that

charming delicacy which forms the most precious dowry of our daughters. I do not conceive the song to be the most proper vehicle for witty and brilliant conceits; simplicity, I believe, should be its prominent feature; but, in some of our songs, the writers have confounded simplicity with coarseness and vulgarity; although between the one and the other, as Dr Beattie well observes, there is as great a difference as between a plain suit of clothes and a bundle of rags. The humorous ballad, or pathetic complaint, is best suited to our artless melodies; and more interesting, indeed, in all songs, than the most pointed wit, dazzling descriptions, and flowery fancies.

With these trite observations, I send you eleven of the songs, for which it is my wish to substitute others of your writing. I shall soon transmit the rest, and, at the same time, a prospectus of the whole collection: and you may believe we will receive any hints that you are so kind as to give for improving the work, with the greatest pleasure and thankfulness.

I remain, dear Sir, &c.

No. IV.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

My Dear Sir,

Let me tell you that you are too fastidious in your ideas of songs and ballads. I own that your criticisms are just; the songs you specify in your list have all but one the faults you remark in them; but who shall mend the matter? Who shall rise up and say—Go to, I will make a better? For instance, on reading over the 'Lea-rig,' I immediately set about trying my hand on it, and, after all, I could make nothing more of it than the following, which, Heaven knows, is poor enough:—

MY AIN KIND DEARIE O.

When o'er the hill the eastern star,
Tells bughtin-time is near, my jo;
And owsen frae the furrow'd field,
Return sae dowff and weary, O;
Down by the burn, where scented birks,*
Wi' dew are hanging clear, my jo,
I'll meet thee on the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie, O.

In mirkest glen at midnight hour,
I'd rove and ne'er be eerie, O,
If thro' that glen I gaed to thee,
My ain kind dearie, O.
Altho' the night were ne'er sae wild,†
And I were ne'er sae wearie, O,
I'd meet thee on the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie, O.

* For "scented birks," in some copies, "birken buds."

† In the copy transmitted to Mr Thomson, instead of *wild*, was inserted *wet*. But in one of the manuscripts, probably written afterwards, wet was changed into wild; evidently a great improvement. The lovers might meet on the lea-rig, 'although the night were ne'er so *wild*,' that is, although the summer-wind blew, the sky lowered, and the thunder murmured: such circumstances might render their meeting still more interesting. But if the night were actually wet, why should they meet on the lea-rig? On a wet night the imagination cannot contemplate their situation there with any complacency.—Tibullus, and after him Hammond, has conceived a happier situation for lovers on a wet night. Probably Burns had in his mind the verse of an old Scottish Song, in which *wet* and *weary* are naturally enough conjoined.

"When my ploughman comes hame at ev'n,
He's often wet and weary;
Cast off the wet, put on the dry,
And gae to bed, my deary." *Currie.*

The hunter lo'es the morning sun,
To rouse the mountain deer, my jo;
At noon the fisher seeks the glen,
Along the burn to steer, my jo:
Gie me the hour o' gloamin grey,
It makes my heart sae cheerie, O,
To meet thee on the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie, O.‡

‡ For the sake of connection we have given the concluding stanza of this fine song here, although it occurs in a subsequent communication by Burns to Mr Thomson. By Mr Buchan we are informed that the original or old name of this song was the *Ware-horse*. "Burns and Fergusson," says he, "have exerted their skill to make words worthy of so fine an air; but my great grandmother's way ran thus:

I hae been at the ware-horse,
Till I am wet and weary, O;
Cast off the wet, put on the dry,
Come to your bed, my deary, O.
I'll row you up, I'll row you down,
And row till I be weary, O;
I'll row you on the lea-rig,
My ain kind deary, O.

But how are ye sae bauld, Sir,
And you my father's cottar, O;
As row me on the lea-rig,
And me his eldest dochter, O?
As row me up, and row me down,
And row till I be weary, O;
And row me on the lea-rig,
My ain kind deary, O.

Then tho' the night be ne'er sae dark,
And I be wet and weary, O;
I'll hap you in my petticoat,
My ain kind deary, O.
Then row me up, and row me down,
And row till ye be weary, O;
And row me on the lea-rig,
My ain kind deary, O.

To those unacquainted with the term or name of Ware-horse, it may be necessary to add, by way of explanation, that along the

Your observation, as to the aptitude of Dr Percy's ballad to the air 'Nannie O,' is just. It is besides, perhaps, the most beautiful ballad in the English language. But let me remark to you, that, in the sentiment and style of our Scottish airs, there is a pastoral simplicity, a something that one may call the Doric style and dialect of vocal music, to which a dash of our native tongue and manners is particularly, nay peculiarly, apposite. For this reason, and, upon my honour, for this reason alone, I am of opinion (but, as I told you before, my opinion is yours, freely yours, to approve, or reject, as you please) that my ballad of 'Nannie O' might, perhaps, do for one set of verses to the tune. Now don't let it enter into your head that you are under any necessity of taking my verses. I have long ago made up my mind as to my own reputation in the business of authorship; and have nothing to be pleased or offended at in your adoption or rejection of my verses. Though you should reject one half of what I give you, I shall be pleased with your adopting the other half, and shall continue to serve you with the same assiduity.

In the printed copy of my 'Nannie O,' the name of the river is horridly prosaic. I will alter it,

"Behind yon hills where Lugar flows."

Girvan is the name of the river that suits the idea of the stanza best, but Lugar is the most agreeable modulation of syllables.

I will soon give you a great many more remarks on this business; but I have just now an opportunity of conveying you this scrawl, free of postage, an expense that it is ill able

rocky and steep coast of the east of Scotland the adjoining lands were manured with a kind of sea-weed, called *ware*, which was carried on the backs of dwarf horses in wooden creels or curroches, and led by the young women belonging to the farm.—The men's duty was to gather it from the sea, load the horses, and afterwards spread it on the land."—M.

to pay: so, with my best compliments to honest Allan, Good be wi' ye, &c.

Friday Night.

Saturday Morning.

As I find I have still an hour to spare this morning before my conveyance goes away, I will give you 'Nannie O' at length. (Vide vol II. p. 94.)

Your remarks on 'Ewe-bughts, Marion,' are just: still it has obtained a place among our more classical Scottish songs; and what, with many beauties in its composition, and more prejudices in its favour, you will not find it easy to supplant it.

In my very early years, when I was thinking of going to the West Indies, I took the following farewell of a dear girl. It is quite trifling, and has nothing of the merits of 'Ewe-bughts;' but it will fill up this page. You must know, that all my earlier love songs were the breathings of ardent passion, and though it might have been easy in after-times to have given them a polish, yet that polish to me, whose they were, and who perhaps alone cared for them, would have defaced the legend of my heart, which was so faithfully inscribed on them. Their uncouth simplicity was, as they say of wines, their race.

TO MARY CAMPBELL.*

WILL ye go to the Indies, my Mary,
And leave auld Scotia's shore?
Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary,
Across th' Atlantic's roar?

O sweet grows the lime and the orange,
And the apple on the pine;

* The first line of this song was taken from an old Irish one, beginning,

"Will ye go to Dublin, my Molly?" M.

But a' the charms o' the Indies
Can never equal thine.

I hae sworn by the Heavens to my Mary,
I hae sworn by the Heavens to be true;
And sae may the Heavens forget me,
When I forget my vow!

O plight me your faith, my Mary,
And plight me your lily-white hand;
O plight me your faith, my Mary;
Before I leave Scotia's strand.

We hae plighted our troth, my Mary,
In mutual affection to join;
And curst be the cause that shall part us!
The hour and the moment o' time!*

'Galla Water,' and 'Auld Rob Morris,' I think, will most probably be the next subject of my musings. However, even on my verses, speak out your criticisms with equal frankness. My wish is, not to stand aloof, the uncomplying bigot of *opiniâtreté*, but cordially to join issue with you in the furtherance of the work.

No. V.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

November 8th, 1792.

If you mean, my dear Sir, that all the songs in your collection shall be poetry of the first merit, I am afraid you will find more difficulty in the undertaking than you

* This song Mr Thomson has not adopted in his collection. It deserves however to be preserved.—*Currie.*

are aware of. There is a peculiar rhythmus in many of our airs, and a necessity of adapting syllables to the emphasis, or what I would call the feature-notes of the tune, that cramp the poet, and lay him under almost insuperable difficulties. For instance, in the air, 'My wife's a wanton wee thing,' if a few lines smooth and pretty can be adapted to it, it is all you can expect. The following were made extempore to it; and though, on farther study, I might give you something more profound, yet it might not suit the light-horse gallop of the air so well as this random clink.

MY WIFE'S A WINSOME WEE THING.*

She is a winsome wee thing,
She is a handsome wee thing,
She is a bonnie wee thing,
This sweet wee wife o' mine.

I never saw a fairer,
I never lo'd a dearer,
And niest my heart I'll wear her
For fear my jewel tine.

She is a winsome wee thing,
She is a handsome wee thing,

* There are many sets of this old song on which this is framed, to be found both in print and on the breath of tradition. In Herd's Collection, vol. ii. p. 230, we have the following version:—

My wife's a wanton wee thing,
My wife's a wanton wee thing,
My wife's a wanton wee thing;
She'll never be guided by me.

She play'd the loon e'er she was married,
She play'd the loon e'er she was married,
She play'd the loon e'er she was married;
She'll do't again e'er she die.

The traditional copies celebrate the virtues and vices of a pigmy drunken wife.—M.

She is a bonnie wee thing,
This sweet wee wife o' mine.

The warld's wrack we share o't,
The warstle and the care o't;
Wi' her I'll blythely bear it,
And think my lot divine.

I have just been looking over the 'Collier's bonny Dochter;' and if the following rhapsody, which I composed the other day, on a charming Ayrshire girl, Miss Lesley Baillie, (afterwards Mrs Cuming of Logie,) as she passed through this place to England, will suit your taste better than the 'Collier Lassie,' fall on and welcome.

BONNIE LESLEY.*

O saw ye bonnie Lesley
As she gaed o'er the border.
She's gane, like Alexander,
To spread her conquests farther.

* The last word in the third line of this song, gave Mr Thomson some uneasiness. He wished some other word to take the rank and precedence of Alexander; but Burns, true to his post, would not yield to the dictation of the critic. He perhaps was right; and, at any rate, can claim for precedent the great marquis of Montrose, who, in one of his best songs, says,

As Alexander I will reign,
And I will reign alone;
My thoughts did evermore disdain
A rival on my throne.

In speaking of the fair object who inspired these verses, Burns, in a letter to Mrs Dunlop, dated August, 1792, thus describes his emotions:—"Know then, that the heart-struck awe,—the distant humble approach,—the delight we should have in gazing upon and listening to a messenger of heaven, appearing in all the unspotted purity of his celestial home, among the course, polluted, far inferior sons of men, to deliver to them tidings that make their hearts swim in joy, and their imaginations soar in transport,—such, so delighting, and so pure, were the emotions of my soul on meeting the other day with Miss Lesley

To see her is to love her,
And love but her for ever;
For Nature made her what she is,
And never made anither!

Thou art a queen, fair Lesley,
Thy subjects we, before thee:
Thou art divine, fair Lesley,
The hearts o' men adore thee.

The Deil he could na scaith thee,
Or aught that wad belang thee;
He'd look into thy bonnie face,
And say, "I canna wrang thee."

The powers aboon will tent thee;
Misfortune sha'na steer thee;
Thou'rt like themselves sae lovely,
That ill they'll ne'er let near thee.

Return again, fair Lesley,
Return to Caledonie!
That we may brag, we hae a lass
There's nane again sae bonnie.

I have hitherto deferred the sublimer, more pathetic airs, until more leisure, as they will take, and deserve, a greater effort. However, they are all put into your hands, as clay into the hands of the potter, to make one vessel to honour and another to dishonour. Farewell, &c.

Baillie, your neighbour. Mr Baillie, with his two daughters, accompanied by Mr H. of G., passing through Dumfries a few days ago, on their way to England, did me the honour of calling on me: on which occasion I took my horse, (though, God knows, I could ill spare the time,) and accompanied them fourteen or fifteen miles, and dined and spent the day with them. 'Twas about nine, I think, when I left them; and riding home I composed the following ballad."—M.

No. VI.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

HIGHLAND MARY.*

Tune—"Katharine Ogie."

Ye banks, and braes, and streams around,
The castle o' Montgomery,
Green be your woods and fair your flowers,
Your waters never drumlie!
There simmer first unfald her robes,
And there the langest tarry:
For there I took the last fareweel
O' my sweet Highland Mary.

* In a preceding volume we have given a short account of Highland Mary, and of her last and affecting interview with her passionate lover. The subjoined particulars have been supplied to us, as they have been to Mr Cunningham, by our friend John Kerr, Esq., Writer in Glasgow, who communicated them to the Scots Times Newspaper, in which Journal they were published, 7th Nov. 1829.

"The parents of Highland Mary lived in Greenock, and she crossed the firth of Clyde to visit some relations in Cowal, previous to her marriage. Her father was a mariner; had two sons, Archibald and Robert; and, besides Mary, a daughter, named Anne, who married James Anderson, a stonemason. All these individuals are now dead: Mary was not long outlived by her father and brothers: her mother died in great poverty in the year 1828. The representatives of Highland Mary, therefore, now consist of Anderson's children—two sons and two daughters. Mary it appears was not hurried to the grave immediately after her return from Cowal: she lived several weeks with her father, and every week received a letter from her lover. The circumstance of a girl in her humble condition receiving a letter weekly, excited the curiosity of the neighbours: the secret was carefully hunted out, and one of the gossips informed her father and mother that Mary was in the habit of receiving letters from a person named Burns, who was known to be a strange character, and 'a great scoffer at women.' Mary was questioned on the subject, and admitted the correspondence, laughing heartily at the

How sweetly bloom'd the gay green birk,
How rich the hawthorn's blossom!
As underneath their fragrant shade,
I clasp'd her to my bosom!
The golden hours, on angel wings,
Flew o'er me and my dearie;
For dear to me as light and life,
Was my sweet Highland Mary.

description of her lover, whose scoffing, she said, she was ready to trust to. After this, Mary was allowed to receive her letters openly: one of them, it appears, contained the song of 'The Highland Lassie, O;' for her mother got it by heart from the Poet's correspondence, and, in her declining years, soothed her grand-children with strains which recorded the charms of her favourite daughter.

"It is to be regretted that none of these letters are now in existence. After Mary's death, her father disliked all allusions to her or to her lover; and when Burns wrote a moving letter, requesting some memorial of her he loved so dearly, the stern old man neither answered it, nor allowed any one to speak about it in his presence. His grand children can sing some scraps of the songs which he wrote in praise of their aunt; and these, save the Bible presented to her by the Poet, are all that the relatives of Highland Mary have to bear testimony of the love that was between her and Burns.

"Before the 'last farewell,' commemorated in the song of 'Highland Mary,' was taken, the lovers plighted mutual faith, and, exchanging Bibles, stood with a running stream between, and, lifting up its waters in their hands, vowed love while the woods of Montgomery grew and its waters ran. The spot where this took place is still pointed out. Mary's Bible was of the commonest kind, and consisted of one volume only—that of Burns was elegantly bound, and consisting of two volumes. In the first volume he had written,—'And ye shall not swear by my name falsely—I am the Lord. Lev. chap. xix., v. 12.'—In the second —'Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oath. St. Matth. chap. v., v. 33;' and on a blank leaf of both volumes, 'Robert Burns, Mossgiel.' By the death of Mary, this Bible came into the possession of her mother, who, about twelve years ago, gave it to her only surviving daughter, Mrs Anderson. The circumstance of its being in two volumes seemed at one period to threaten its dismemberment; for, upwards of five years since, Mrs Anderson presented a volume to each of her two daughters; but on the approaching marriage of

Wi' mony a vow, and lock'd embrace,
Our parting was fu' tender;
And, pledging aft to meet again,
We tore oursels asunder;
But Oh! fell death's untimely frost,
That nipt my flower sae early!
Now green's the sod, and cauld's the clay,
That wraps my Highland Mary!

these two females sometime afterwards, her eldest son, William Anderson, a mason in Renton, prevailed on each of his sisters to dispose of the volumes they had received to him; and thus both volumes, once more united, now remain in the custody of the senior nephew of Highland Mary. The sacred verses we have quoted above remain in the bold, distinct hand-writing of the Poet; but his signature, on the opposite leaves, is almost wholly obliterated. In the first volume, a masonic emblem, drawn by Burns, below his signature, is in complete preservation. Mr William Anderson is also possessed of a pretty large lock of his aunt, Highland Mary's hair, a portion of which he presented to us, as a relic of the Bard's first love.

"We now come to another era in the history of this Bible. Mr Archibald, schoolmaster in Largs, an admirer of Burns, and a votary of the Scottish muse, waited, it is said, on old Widow Campbell, some time before her death, for the purpose of purchasing the volumes. He learnt, however, that she was a pauper on the roll of the Kirk Session of Greenock, who, in consequence, were entitled to take possession of her little property as soon as death removed her from this world; but in the mean time, to secure a right to them, he is said to have bargained with her that he should become the possessor of the volumes when that event took place, at such a price as might be agreed upon between him and the Session. In February last, Mr Archibald having heard that the Bible had found its way into the custody of one of the elders, presented a memorial to the Session:

"'Your Memorialist will not presume to dictate to your Reverend Body what you may or ought to do with the Bible. He takes leave, however, to say, that if you do not see fit to retain them as public property, estimable to the people of Greenock, in consequence of the historical circumstances connected with these volumes, having been within their locality, he, the Memorialist, will be proud to be one of those who will gladly come forward to offer you a handsome sum of money for behoof of the poor, for the possession of the Sacred Pledges of Burns' purest affection. He has no doubt that many will compete with him in the gener-

O pale, pale now, those rosy lips,
I aft hae kiss'd sae fondly!
And clos'd for aye the sparkling glance,
That dwelt on me sae kindly;
And mouldering now in silent dust
That heart that lo'ed me dearly!
But still within my bosom's core,
Shall live my Highland Mary.

ous strife of obtaining the books, and that, if you see fit in this way to raise it, a considerable sum may be realized for the necessities of the poor.'

"On this memorial the Session pronounced the following judgment upon it:—

"'The Kirk Session of the Old Parish of Greenock, with their Heritors, being met—*inter alia*, the Kirk Treasurer laid before the meeting a letter from Mr Joseph J. Archibald, Teacher at Largs, containing an offer of £10. for the effects (including furniture, books, &c. &c.) left by Widow Campbell, mother to Burns' Highland Mary, which effects became the property of the Kirk Session, in consequence of the said Widow Campbell being, for several years, a pauper on their roll. The Session agreed to resign their hypothec in said effects to and in favour of the said Mr Joseph J. Archibald, for the aforesaid sum of £10. and authorize their clerk to intimate this to him.'

"Notwithstanding the grave and formal tenor of this resolution, we suspect that the Bible is the unquestionable property of its present possessor, and if the account we have received of his character and conduct approach the truth, he is well worthy of remaining their custodier in perpetuity."

A correspondent informs us, who resides in Dalry, that the John Jamieson Archibald had the Bibles, alluded to in the preceding narrative, for a considerable time in his possession, and that he deposited them, along with a lock of Mary's hair, in our correspondent's hands for some time. Jamieson was in the employment of Dr Kirk, late of Greenock, now in Glasgow, where he took badly, and his mother went from Dalry to nurse him. On his death, and her return to Dalry, our correspondent inquired about the Bibles, but she informed him that she had never seen the Bibles all the while she remained in Greenock. Of course it is impossible to say into whose possession these precious relics have found their way. Our correspondent, Mr Andrew Crawford, Dalry, Ayrshire, still retains a small portion of the lock of Highland Mary's hair.—M.

14*th November*, 1792.

MY DEAR SIR,

I AGREE with you that the song, 'Katharine Ogie,' is very poor stuff, and unworthy, altogether unworthy, of so beautiful an air. I tried to mend it, but the awkward sound Ogie recurring so often in the rhyme, spoils every attempt at introducing sentiment into the piece. The foregoing song pleases myself; I think it is in my happiest manner; you will see at first glance that it suits the air The subject of the song is one of the most interesting passages of my youthful days; and I own that I should be much flattered to see the verses set to an air which would insure celebrity. Perhaps, after all, 'tis the still glowing prejudice of my heart, that throws a borrowed lustre over the merits of the composition.

I have partly taken your idea of 'Auld Rob Morris.' I have adopted the two first verses, and am going on with the song on a new plan, which promises pretty well. I take up one or another, just as the bee of the moment buzzes in my bonnet-lug; and do you, *sans ceremonie*, make what use you choose of the productions. Adieu! &c.

No. VII.

MR THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, *November*, 1792.

DEAR SIR,

I WAS just going to write to you, that on meeting with your Nannie I had fallen violently in love with her. I thank you, therefore, for sending the charming rustic to me, in the dress you wish her to appear before the public. She does you great credit, and will soon be admitted into the best company.

I regret that your song for the 'Lea-rig' is so short;

the air is easy, soon sung, and very pleasing; so that, if the singer stops at the end of two stanzas, it is a pleasure lost ere it is well possessed.*

Although a dash of our native tongue and manners is doubtless peculiarly congenial and appropriate to our melodies, yet I shall be able to present a considerable number of the very flowers of English song, well adapted to those melodies, which in England at least will be the means of recommending them to still greater attention than they have procured there. But you will observe, my plan is that every air shall, in the first place, have verses wholly by Scottish poets; and that those of English writers shall follow as additional songs, for the choice of the singer.

What you say of the 'Ewe-bughts' is just; I admire it, and never meant to supplant it. All I requested was, that you would try your hand on some of the inferior stanzas, which are apparently no part of the original song: but this I do not urge, because the song is of sufficient length though those inferior stanzas be omitted, as they will be by the singer of taste. You must not think I expect all the songs to be of superlative merit: that were an unreasonable expectation. I am sensible that no poet can sit down doggedly to pen verses, and succeed well at all times.

I am highly pleased with your humorous and amorous rhapsody on 'Bonnie Leslie:' it is a thousand times better than the 'Collier's Lassie!' "The deil he couldna skaith thee, &c." is an eccentric and happy thought. Do you not think, however, that the names of such old heroes as Alexander, sound rather queer, unless in pompous or mere burlesque verse? Instead of the line "And never made anither," I would humbly suggest, "And ne'er made sic anither;" and I would fain have you substitute some other line for "Return to Caledonie," in the last verse, because I think this alteration of the orthography, and of the sound

* The fashion of the day, however, is short songs. At present nothing can be tolerated in the way of a song, above a couple of stanzas.—M.

of Caledonia, disfigures the word, and renders it Hudibrastic.

Of the other song, 'My wife's a winsome wee thing,' I think the first eight lines very good, but I do not admire the other eight, because four of them are a bare repetition of the first verse. I have been trying to spin a stanza, but could make nothing better than the following: do you mend it, or as Yorick did with the love-letter, whip it up in your own way.

O leeze me on my wee thing,
My bonnie blithsome wee thing;
Sae lang's I hae my wee thing,
I'll think my lot divine.

Tho' warld's care we share o't,
And may see meikle mare o't;
Wi' her I'll blithly bear it,
And ne'er a word repine.

You perceive, my dear Sir, I avail myself of the liberty which you condescend to allow me, by speaking freely what I think. Be assured, it is not my disposition to pick out the faults of any poem or picture I see: my first and chief object is to discover and be delighted with the beauties of the piece. If I sit down to examine critically, and at leisure, what perhaps you have written in haste, I may happen to observe careless lines the re-perusal of which might lead you to improve them. The wren will often see what has been overlooked by the eagle.

I remain yours faithfully, &c.

P. S. Your verses upon Highland Mary are just come to hand: they breathe the genuine spirit of poetry, and, like the music, will last for ever. Such verses united to such an air, with the delicate harmony of Pleyel superadded, might form a treat worthy of being presented to Apollo

himself. I have heard the sad story of your Mary: you always seem inspired when you write of her.

No. VIII.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

DUMFRIES, 1*st Dec.* 1792.

YOUR alterations of my 'Nannie O' are perfectly right. So are those of 'My wife's a wanton wee thing.' Your alteration of the second stanza is a positive improvement. Now, my dear Sir, with the freedom which characterizes our correspondence, I must not, cannot alter 'Bonnie Leslie.' You are right, the word "Alexander," makes the line a little uncouth, but I think the thought is pretty. Of Alexander, beyond all other heroes, it may be said, in the sublime language of scripture, that "he went forth conquering and to conquer."

> "For Nature made her what she is,
> And never made anither;" (such a person as she is.)

This is in my opinion more poetical than "Ne'er made sic anither." However, it is immaterial: make it either way.* "Caledonie," I agree with you, is not so good a word as could be wished, though it is sanctioned in three or four instances by Allan Ramsay: but I cannot help it. In short, that species of stanza is the most difficult that I have ever tried.

The 'Lea-rig' is as follows. (Here the poet gives the two first stanzas, as before, p. 52. with the following in addition:)

> The hunter lo'es the morning sun,
> To rouse the mountain deer, my jo;

* Mr Thomson has decided on "Ne'er made sic anither."—*Currie.*

At noon the fisher seeks the glen,
Along the burn to steer, my jo;
Gie me the hour o' gloamin grey,
It maks my heart sae cheery, O,
To meet thee on the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie, O.

I am interrupted. Yours, &c.

No. IX.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

AULD ROB MORRIS.*

THERE's auld Rob Morris that wons in yon glen,
He's the king o' guid fellows and wale of auld men;
He has gowd in his coffers, he has owsen and kine,
And ae bonnie lassie, his darling and mine.

* The two first lines are taken from an old ballad—the rest is wholly original.—*Currie.*

This song is a great improvement on the old ballad; but still it was not a bad song, and bereaves this of the claim of originality. It is as follows:

There's auld Rob Morris that wons in yon glen,
He's the king o' gude fellows and the wale o' auld men,
He has kie in his byres, an' yowes on the brae,
And auld Rob Morris is the man ye maun hae.

Dear father, he's doited, a shame to be seen;
And what can he do wi' a lass o' nineteen!
He's out-shinn'd, and in-shinn'd, and ringle-e'ed too,
And auld Rob Morris I never can loe.

But auld Rob Morris, he is a gude laird,
And your daddy has nought but a cot-house and yard,
He's a leel and a hale and a proper auld man,
And his auld brass will buy you a new pan. H.

She's fresh as the morning, the fairest in May:
She's sweet as the ev'ning amang the new hay:
As blithe and as artless as the lambs on the lea,
And dear to my heart as the light to my e'e.

But Oh! she's an heiress, auld Robin's a laird,
And my daddie has naught but a cot-house and yard;
A wooer like me maunna hope to come speed,
The wounds I must hide that will soon be my dead.

The day comes to me, but delight brings me nane;
The night comes to me, but my rest it is gane:
I wander my lane like a night-troubled ghaist,
And I sigh as my heart it wad burst in my breast.

O had she but been of a lower degree,
I then might hae hop'd she wad smil'd upon me!
O, how past discriving had then been my bliss,
As now my distraction no words can express!

DUNCAN GRAY.*

Duncan Gray cam here to woo,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't,
On blithe yule night when we were fu',
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.
Maggie coost her head fu' high,
Look'd asklent and unco skeigh,
Gart poor Duncan stand abeigh;
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

Duncan fleech'd, and Duncan pray'd:
Ha, ha, the wooing o't,

* Burns, no doubt, took upon himself to be the renovator of Scottish song, and in that capacity has perhaps done us as much service as in his own original capacity. This is a clever modification of a clever old inadmissible ballad.—H.

Meg was deaf as Ailsa Craig,*
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.
Duncan sigh'd baith out and in,
Grat his een baith bleert and blin',
Spak o' lowpin o'er a linn;
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

Time and chance are but a tide,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't,
Slighted love is sair to bide,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.
Shall I, like a fool, quoth he,
For a haughty hizzie die?
She may gae to—France for me!
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

How it comes let doctors tell,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't,
Meg grew sick—as he grew heal,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.
Something in her bosom wrings,
For relief a sigh she brings;
And O, her een, they spak sic things!
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

Duncan was a lad o' grace,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't,
Maggie's was a piteous case,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.
Duncan couldna be her death,
Swelling pity smoor'd his wrath;
Now they're crouse and canty baith.
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.†

* A well-known rock in the Frith of Clyde.

† This has nothing in common with the old licentious ballad of Duncan Gray, but the first line, and part of the third.—The rest is wholly original.—*Currie.*

4th December, 1792.

The foregoing I submit, my dear Sir, to your better judgment. Acquit them, or condemn them, as seemeth good in your sight. Duncan Gray is that kind of light-horse gallop of an air, which precludes sentiment. The ludicrous is its ruling feature.

No. X.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

SONG.*

Tune—"I had a horse."

O POORTITH cauld, and restless love,
Ye wreck my peace between ye;
Yet poortith a' I could forgive,
An 'twere na for my Jeanie.
O why should fate sic pleasure have,
Life's dearest bands untwining?
Or why sae sweet a flower as love,
Depend on Fortune's shining?

This warld's wealth when I think on,
Its pride, and a' the lave o't;
Fie, fie on silly coward man,
That he should be the slave o't.
O why should fate, &c.

Her een sae bonnie blue betray,
How she repays my passion;

* The heroine of this beautiful song was Miss Jean Lorimer, of Kemmis-hall in Kirkmahoe. We very much suspect that the Poet's admiration of her was, from all we have heard, "of the earth earthly."—M.

But prudence is her o'erword aye,
She talks of rank and fashion.
O why should fate, &c.

O wha can prudence think upon,
And sic a lassie by him?
O wha can prudence think upon,
And sae in love as I am?
O why should fate, &c.

How blest the humble cotter's fate! *
He woos his simple dearie;
The sillie bogles, wealth and state,
Can never make them eerie.
O why should fate sic pleasure have,
Life's dearest bands untwining?
Or why sae sweet a flower as love
Depend on Fortune's shining?

GALLA WATER.†

THERE's braw braw lads on Yarrow braes,
That wander thro' the blooming heather;
But Yarrow braes, nor Ettrick shaws,
Can match the lads o' Galla Water.

* "The wild-wood Indian's fate," in the original MS.

† This was founded on the old song of 'Galla Water,' which we subjoin. The old words, which appear in Johnson's Museum, and in song collections fifty years before, Mr Cunningham, owing to some odd overlook, ascribes in part to Burns. As they appear in the Museum, they had appeared in various publications many years before the birth of the Poet. Many traditional variations occur, and numerous streams beside the Galla claim the precedence for the "braw lads," who dwell on their banks.

Braw, braw lads of Galla Water,
O braw lads of Galla Water;
I'll kilt my coats up to my knee,
And follow my love thro' the water.

But there is ane, a secret ane,
Aboon them a' I loe him better;
And I'll be his, and he'll be mine,
The bonnie lad o' Galla Water.

Altho' his daddie was nae laird,
And tho' I hae nae meickle tocher;
Yet, rich in kindest, truest love,
We'll tent our flocks by Galla Water.

It ne'er was wealth, it ne'er was wealth,
That coft contentment, peace, or pleasure;
The bands and bliss o' mutual love,
O that's the chiefest world's treasure!

Jan. 1793.

Many returns of the season to you, my dear Sir. How comes on your publication? will these two foregoing be of any service to you? I should like to know what songs you print to each tune besides the verses to which it is set. In short, I would wish to give you my opinion on all the poetry you publish. You know it is my trade, and a man in the way of his trade may suggest useful hints, that escape men of much superior parts and endowments in other things.

If you meet with my dear and much-valued Cunningham, greet him, in my name, with the compliments of the season.

Yours, &c.

Sae fair her hair, sae brent her brow,
Sae bonnie blue her een, my deary,
Sae white her teeth, sae sweet her mou'
I aften kiss her till I'm weary.

O'er yon bank, and o'er yon brae,
O'er yon moss amang the heather,
I'll kilt my coats aboon my knee,
And follow my love thro' the water.
Down amang the broom, the broom,
Down amang the broom, my deary;
The lassy lost her silken snood,
That gar'd her greet till she was weary. M.

No. XI.

MR THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, *Jan.* 20, 1793.

You make me happy, my dear Sir, and thousands will be happy to see the charming songs you have sent me. Many merry returns of the season to you, and may you long continue, among the sons and daughters of Caledonia, to delight them and to honour yourself.

The four last songs with which you favoured me, viz. 'Auld Rob Morris,' 'Duncan Gray,' 'Galla Water,' and 'Cauld Kail,' are admirable. Duncan is indeed a lad of grace, and his humour will endear him to every body.

The distracted lover in 'Auld Rob,' and the happy shepherdess in 'Galla Water,' exhibit an excellent contrast: they speak from genuine feeling, and powerfully touch the heart.

The number of songs which I had originally in view, was limited; but I now resolve to include every Scotch air and song worth singing, leaving none behind but mere gleanings, to which the publishers of *omnegatherum* are welcome. I would rather be the editor of a collection from which nothing could be taken away, than of one to which nothing could be added. We intend presenting the subscribers with two beautiful stroke engravings; the one characteristic of the plaintive, and the other of the lively songs; and I have Dr Beattie's promise of an essay upon the subject of our national music, if his health will permit him to write it. As a number of our songs have doubtless been called forth by particular events, or by the charms of peerless damsels, there must be many curious anecdotes relating to them.

The late Mr Tytler of Woodhouselee, I believe, knew more of this than any body, for he joined to the pursuits of an antiquary, a taste for poetry, besides being a man of the

world, and possessing an enthusiasm for music beyond most of his contemporaries. He was quite pleased with this plan of mine, for I may say it has been solely managed by me, and we had several long conversations about it when it was in embryo. If I could simply mention the name of the heroine of each song, and the incident which occasioned the verses, it would be gratifying. Pray, will you send me any information of this sort, as well with regard to your own songs, as the old ones?

To all the favourite songs of the plaintive or pastoral kind, will be joined the delicate accompaniments, &c. of Pleyel. To those of the comic and humorous class, I think accompaniments scarcely necessary; they are chiefly fitted for the conviviality of the festive board, and a tuneful voice, with a proper delivery of the words, renders them perfect. Nevertheless, to these I propose adding bass accompaniments, because then they are fitted either for singing, or for instrumental performance, when there happens to be no singer. I mean to employ our right trusty friend Mr Clarke, to set the bass to these, which he assures me he will do *con amore*, and with much greater attention than he ever bestowed on any thing of the kind. But for this last class of airs I will not attempt to find more than one set of verses.

That eccentric bard, Peter Pindar, has started I know not how many difficulties, about writing for the airs I sent to him, because of the peculiarity of their measure, and the trammels they impose on his flying Pegasus. I subjoin for your perusal the only one I have yet got from him, being for the fine air 'Lord Gregory.' The Scots verses printed with that air, are taken from the middle of an old ballad, called 'The Lass of Lochroyan,' which I do not admire.* I have set down the air therefore as a creditor of yours.

* Mr Thomson is not remarkable for the correctness of his taste in regard to old Scottish ballads. The one he has alluded to, of which various versions occur in our collections, is, we think, an instance in point.—M.

Many of the Jacobite songs are replete with wit and humour; might not the best of these be included in our volume of comic songs?

POSTSCRIPT,

FROM THE HON. A. ERSKINE.

Mr Thomson has been so obliging as to give me a perusal of your songs. 'Highland Mary' is most enchantingly pathetic, and 'Duncan Gray' possesses native genuine humour; "spak o' lowpin o'er a linn," is a line of itself that should make you immortal. I sometimes hear of you from our mutual friend Cunninghame, who is a most excellent fellow, and possesses, above all men I know, the charm of a most obliging disposition. You kindly promised me, about a year ago, a collection of your unpublished productions, religious and amorous; I know from experience how irksome it is to copy. If you will get any trusty person in Dumfries to write them over fair, I will give Peter Hill whatever money he asks for his trouble, and I certainly shall not betray your confidence.

I am your hearty admirer,

ANDREW ERSKINE.

No. XII.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

26th January, 1793.

I approve greatly, my dear Sir, of your plans. Dr Beattie's essay will of itself be a treasure. On my part, I mean to draw up an appendix to the Doctor's essay, containing my stock of anecdotes, &c. of our Scots songs. All the late Mr Tytler's anecdotes I have by me, taken down in the course of my acquaintance with him from his own mouth. I am such an enthusiast, that, in the course of my several

peregrinations through Scotland, I made a pilgrimage to the individual spot from which every song took its rise; 'Lochaber' and the 'Braes of Ballenden,' excepted. So far as the locality, either from the title of the air, or the tenor of the song, could be ascertained, I have paid my devotions at the particular shrine of every Scots muse.

I do not doubt but you might make a very valuable collection of Jacobite songs; but would it give no offence? In the mean time, do not you think that some of them, particularly 'The sow's tail to Geordie,' as an air, with other words, might be well worth a place in your collection of lively songs?

If it were possible to procure songs of merit, it would be proper to have one set of Scots words to every air, and that the set of words to which the notes ought to be set. There is a *naïveté*, a pastoral simplicity, in a slight intermixture of Scots words and phraseology, which is more in unison (at least to my taste, and I will add to every genuine Caledonian taste) with the simple pathos, or rustic sprightliness of our native music, than any English verses whatever.

The very name of Peter Pindar is an acquisition to your work. His 'Gregory' is beautiful. I have tried to give you a set of stanzas in Scots, on the same subject, which are at your service. Not that I intend to enter the lists with Peter; that would be presumption indeed. My song, though much inferior in poetic merit, has, I think, more of the ballad simplicity in it.

LORD GREGORY.

O MIRK, mirk is the midnight hour,
And loud the tempest's roar;
A waefu' wanderer seeks thy tow'r,
Lord Gregory, ope thy door.

An exile frae her father's ha',
And a' for loving thee;

At least some pity on me shaw,
If love it may na be.

Lord Gregory, mind'st thou not the grove,
By bonnie Irwine side,
Where first I own'd that virgin-love
I lang, lang had denied?

How aften didst thou pledge and vow
Thou wad for aye be mine;
And my fond heart, itsel sae true,
It ne'er mistrusted thine.

Hard is thy heart, Lord Gregory,
And flinty is thy breast:
Thou dart of heav'n that flashest by,
O wilt thou give me rest!

Ye mustering thunders from above
Your willing victim see!
But spare, and pardon my false love,
His wrangs to heaven and me!*

* The song of Dr Walcott, on the same subject, is as follows:

Ah ope, Lord Gregory, thy door!
A midnight wanderer sighs;
Hard rush the rains, the tempests roar,
And lightnings cleave the skies.

Who comes with woe at this drear night—
A pilgrim of the gloom?
If she whose love did once delight,
My cot shall yield her room.

Alas! thou heard'st a pilgrim mourn,
That once was priz'd by thee:
Think of the ring by yonder burn
Thou gav'st to love and me.

But should'st thou not poor Marian know,
I'll turn my feet and part;

My most respectful compliments to the honourable gentleman who favoured me with a postscript in your last. He shall hear from me and receive his MSS. soon.

No. XIII.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

20th March, 1793.

MARY MORISON.*

Tune—"Bide ye yet."

O MARY, at thy window be,
It is the wish'd, the trysted hour!
Those smiles and glances let me see,
That make the miser's treasure poor;
How blithely wad I bide the stoure,
A weary slave frae sun to sun;
Could I the rich reward secure,
The lovely Mary Morison.

Yestreen when to the trembling string,
The dance gaed thro' the lighted ha',

And think the storms that round me blow,
Far kinder than thy heart.

It is but doing justice to Dr Walcott to mention, that his song is the original. Mr Burns saw it, liked it, and immediately wrote the other on the same subject, which is derived from the old Scottish ballad of uncertain origin.—*Currie.*

* Of all the productions of Burns, the pathetic and serious love songs which he has left behind him, in the manner of the old ballads, are perhaps those which take the deepest and most lasting hold of the mind. Such are the lines to Mary Morison, those entitled 'Jessy,' and the song, beginning 'O my luve is like a red red rose.'—*Hazlitt.*

To thee my fancy took its wing,
I sat, but neither heard or saw.
Tho' this was fair, and that was braw,
And you the toast of a' the town,
I sigh'd, and said amang them a',
"Ye are na Mary Morison."

O Mary, canst thou wreck his peace,
Wha for thy sake would gladly die?
Or canst thou break that heart of his,
Whase only faut is loving thee?
If love for love thou wilt na gie,
At least be pity to me shown;
A thought ungentle canna be
The thought o' Mary Morison.

MY DEAR SIR,

The song prefixed is one of my juvenile works. I leave it in your hands. I do not think it very remarkable, either for its merits or demerits. It is impossible (at least I feel it so in my stinted powers) to be always original, entertaining, and witty.

What is become of the list, &c. of your songs? I shall be out of all temper with you by-and-by. I have always looked upon myself as the prince of indolent correspondents, and valued myself accordingly; and I will not, cannot bear rivalship from you, nor any body else.

No. XIV.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

March, 1793.

WANDERING WILLIE.*

Here awa, there awa, wandering Willie,
Now tired with wandering, haud awa hame;
Come to my bosom my ae only dearie,
And tell me thou bring'st me my Willie the same.

* There are two old songs to this tune. We give from Herd, vol. ii. page 150, the following:

Here awa, there awa, Willie,
Here awa, there awa, haud awa hame;
Lang have I sought thee, dear have I bought thee,
Now I have gotten my Willie again.

Thro' the lang muir I have followed my Willie,
Thro' the lang muir I have followed him hame;
Whatever betide us, nought shall divide us,
Love now rewards all my sorrow and pain.

Here awa, there awa, haud awa, Willie,
Here awa, there awa, haud awa hame:
Come, love, believe me, naething can grieve me,
Ilka thing pleases while Willie's at hame.

The other is a Jacobite ditty, for which we are indebted to Mr Buchan.

Mony a day hae I followed Duke Willie,
And mony a day hae I followed the drum;
Mony a day hae I followed Duke Willie,
Frae Cullen o' Buchan to Cullen Aboyne.
Gin ye meet my luve kiss her and clap her,
And gin ye meet my luve turn her again;
Gin ye meet my luve kiss her and clap her,
And show her the way to Cullen Aboyne.

Come into my arms my ain bonny Kattie,
Come into my arms and rest ye a while;

Loud blew the cauld winter winds at our parting;
It was nae the blast brought the tear in my e'e:
Now welcome the simmer, and welcome my Willie,
The simmer to nature, my Willie to me.

Ye hurricanes, rest in the cave o' your slumbers!
O how your wild horrors a lover alarms!
Awaken ye breezes, row gently ye billows,
And waft my dear laddie ance mair to my arms.

But if he's forgotten his faithfullest Nannie,
O still flow between us, thou wide roaring main;
May I never see it, may I never trow it,
But dying believe that my Willie's my ain!

I leave it to you, my dear Sir, to determine whether the above, or the old 'Thro' the lang muir,' be the best.

Come into my arms my ain bonny Kattie,
Believe me, my luve, that with me there's nae guile.
Gin ye meet my luve, &c.

Mony a-night hae I broken the glasses,
And mony a-night hae I drunken the wine;
Mony a-night hae I broken the glasses,
When thinking on my luve at Cullen Aboyne.
Gin ye meet my luve, &c.

Mony a-day hae I lac'd your stays, Kattie,
And mony a-day hae I prin'd on your gown;
Mony a-day hae I lac'd your stays, Kattie,
But now ye have left me and Cullen Aboyne.
Gin ye meet my luve, &c.

Her gown it is striped, her cloak it is scarlet,
Her mutches are made o' the Holland sae fine;
While mony-a-day hae I followed Duke Willie,*
And spent a' my money at Cullen Aboyne.
Gin ye meet my luve, &c. M.

---

* Duke of Cumberland.

No. XV.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

OPEN THE DOOR TO ME, OH!

WITH ALTERATIONS.

Oh, open the door, some pity to show,
Oh, open the door to me, Oh!*
Tho' thou hast been false, I'll ever prove true,
Oh, open the door to me, Oh!

Cauld is the blast upon my pale cheek,
But caulder thy love for me, Oh!
The frost that freezes the life at my heart,
Is nought to my pains frae thee, Oh!

The wan moon is setting behind the white wave,
And time is setting with me, Oh!
False friends, false love, farewell! for mair
I'll ne'er trouble them, nor thee, Oh!

She has open'd the door, she has open'd it wide;
She sees his pale corse on the plain, Oh!
My true love! she cried, and sank down by his side,
Never to rise again, Oh!

I do not know whether this song be really mended.

* This second line was originally, "If love it may na be, Oh!"

No. XVI.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

JESSIE.*

Tune—"Bonnie Dundee."

TRUE hearted was he, the sad swain o' the Yarrow,
And fair are the maids on the banks o' the Ayr,
But by the sweet side of the Nith's winding river,
Are lovers as faithful, and maidens as fair;
To equal young Jessie seek Scotland all over;
To equal young Jessie you seek it in vain;
Grace, beauty, and elegance, fetter her lover,
And maidenly modesty fixes the chain.

O, fresh is the rose in the gay, dewy morning,
And sweet is the lily at evening close;
But in the fair presence o' lovely young Jessie,
Unseen is the lily, unheeded the rose.
Love sits in her smile, a wizard insnaring,
Enthron'd in her een he delivers his law:
And still to her charms she alone is a stranger!
Her modest demeanour's the jewel of a'.

No. XVII.

MR THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 2*d April*, 1793.

I WILL not recognise the title you give yourself, "the Prince of *indolent* correspondents;" but if the adjective were taken away, I think the title would then fit you ex-

* The heroine of this song was Miss Jessie Staig, who married Major Miller, second son of Mr Miller of Dalswinton. She died young.—M.

actly. It gives me pleasure to find you can furnish anecdotes with respect to most of the songs: these will be a literary curiosity.

I now send you my list of the songs, which I believe will be found nearly complete. I have put down the first lines of all the English songs which I propose giving in addition to the Scotch verses. If any others occur to you, better adapted to the character of the airs, pray mention them, when you favour me with your strictures upon every thing else relating to the work.

Pleyel has lately sent me a number of the songs, with his symphonies and accompaniments added to them. I wish you were here, that I might serve up some of them to you with your own verses, by way of dessert after dinner. There is so much delightful fancy in the symphonies, and such a delicate simplicity in the accompaniments—they are indeed beyond all praise.

I am very much pleased with the several last productions of your muse: your 'Lord Gregory,' in my estimation, is more interesting than Peter's, beautiful as his is! Your 'Here awa, Willie,' must undergo some alterations to suit the air. Mr Erskine and I have been conning it over; he will suggest what is necessary to make them a fit match.*

* WANDERING WILLIE,

AS ALTERED BY MR ERSKINE AND MR THOMSON.

Here awa, there awa, wandering Willie,
Here awa, there awa, haud awa hame
Come to my bosom, my ain only dearie,
Tell me thou bring'st me my Willie the same.

Winter-winds blew loud and caul at our parting,
Fears for my Willie brought tears in my e'e,
Welcome now simmer, and welcome my Willie,
As simmer to nature, so Willie to me.

Rest, ye wild storms, in the cave o' your slumbers,
How your dread howling a lover alarms!

The gentleman I have mentioned, whose fine taste you are no stranger to, is so well-pleased both with the musical and poetical part of our work, that he has volunteered his assistance, and has already written four songs for it, which by his own desire I send for your perusal.

Blow soft ye breezes! roll gently ye billows!
And waft my dear laddie ance mair to my arms.

But oh, if he's faithless and minds na his Nannie,
Flow still between us thou dark-heaving main!
May I never see it, may I never trow it,
While dying I think that my Willie's my ain.

Our poet, with his usual judgment, adopted some of these alterations, and rejected others. The last edition is as follows:—

Here awa, there awa, wandering Willie,
Here awa, there awa, haud awa hame;
Come to my bosom, my ain only dearie,
Tell me thou bring'st me my Willie the same.

Winter winds blew loud and cauld at our parting,
Fears for my Willie brought tears in my e'e;
Welcome now simmer, and welcome my Willie,
The simmer to nature, my Willie to me.

Rest, ye wild storms, in the cave of your slumbers,
How your dread howling a lover alarms!
Wauken ye breezes, row gently ye billows,
And waft my dear laddie ance mair to my arms.

But oh, if he's faithless, and minds na his Nannie,
Flow still between us thou wide-roaring main!
May I never see it, may I never trow it,
But, dying, believe that my Willie's my ain.

Several of the alterations seem to be of little importance in hemselves, and were adopted, it may be presumed, for the sake of suiting the words better to the music. The Homeric epithet for the sea, *dark-heaving*, suggested by Mr Erskine, is in itself more beautiful, as well perhaps as more sublime, than *wide-roaring*, which he has retained, but as it is only applicable to a placid state of the sea, or at most to the swell left on its surface after the storm is over, it gives a picture of that element not so well

No. XVIII.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

WHEN WILD WAR'S DEADLY BLAST.

Tune—"The Mill, Mill, O."

WHEN wild war's deadly blast was blawn,
And gentle peace returning,
Wi' mony a sweet babe fatherless,
And mony a widow mourning :*
I left the lines and tented field,
Where lang I'd been a lodger,
My humble knapsack a' my wealth,
A poor and honest sodger.

A leal, light heart was in my breast,
My hand unstain'd wi' plunder:
And for fair Scotia, hame again,
I cheery on did wander.
I thought upon the banks o' Coil,
I thought upon my Nancy;
I thought upon the witching smile
That caught my youthful fancy.

At length I reach'd the bonny glen,
Where early life I sported;

adapted to the ideas of eternal separation, which the fair mourner is supposed to imprecate. From the original song of 'Here awa, Willie,' Burns has borrowed nothing but the second line and part of the first. The superior excellence of this beautiful poem will, it is hoped, justify the different editions of it which we have given. —*Currie.*

* Variation, lines 3d and 4th:

"And eyes again with pleasure beam'd,
That had been blear'd with mourning."

See No. XXIV.

I pass'd the mill, and trysting thorn,
Where Nancy aft I courted:
Wha spied I but my ain dear maid,
Down by her mother's dwelling!
And turn'd me round to hide the flood
That in my een was swelling.

Wi' alter'd voice, quoth I, sweet lass,
Sweet as yon hawthorn's blossom,
O! happy, happy may he be,
That's dearest to thy bosom!
My purse is light, I've far to gang,
And fain would be thy lodger;
I've serv'd my king and country lang,
Take pity on a sodger.

Sae wistfully she gaz'd on me,
And lovelier was than ever;
Quo' she, a sodger ance I lo'ed,
Forget him shall I never:
Our humble cot and hamely fare,
Ye freely shall partake it,
That gallant badge, the dear cockade,
Ye're welcome for the sake o't.

She gaz'd—she redden'd like a rose—
Syne pale like ony lily;
She sank within my arms, and cried,
Art thou my ain dear Willie?
By him who made yon sun and sky,
By whom true love's regarded,
I am the man: and thus may still
True lovers be rewarded.

The wars are o'er, and I'm come hame,
And find thee still true-hearted!
Tho' poor in gear, we're rich in love,
And mair we'se ne'er be parted.

Quo' she, my grandsire left me gowd,
A mailen plenish'd fairly;
And come, my faithfu' sodger lad,
Thou'rt welcome to it dearly.

For gold the merchant ploughs the main,
The farmer ploughs the manor;
But glory is the sodger's prize,
The sodger's wealth is honour:
The brave poor sodger ne'er despise,
Nor count him as a stranger;
Remember he's his country's stay,
In day and hour of danger.

MEG O' THE MILL.*

Tune—"O bonnie lass, will you lie in a barrack."

O ken ye what Meg o' the Mill has gotten?
And ken ye what Meg o' the Mill has gotten?
She has gotten a coof wi' a claut o' siller,
And broken the heart o' the barley Miller.

The Miller was strappin, the Miller was ruddy;
A heart like a lord and a hue like a lady:
The laird was a widdiefu', bleerit knurl;
She's left the guid-fellow and ta'en the churl.

The Miller he hecht her a heart leal and loving:
The Laird did address her wi' matter mair moving,
A fine pacing-horse wi' a clear chained bridle,
A whip by her side, and a bonnie side-saddle.

* At page 25 of this volume we have given the old set of the song as touched up by Burns, for Johnson's Scots Musical Museum.—M.

O wae on the siller it is sae prevailing;
And wae on the love that is fixed on a mailen!
A tocher's nae word in a true lover's parle,
But, gie me my love, and a fig for the warl'!

No. XIX.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

7th April, 1793.

THANK you, my dear Sir, for your packet. You cannot imagine how much this business of composing for your publication has added to my enjoyments. What with my early attachment to ballads, your book, &c. ballad-making is now as completely my hobby-horse as ever fortification was Uncle Tobby's; so I'll e'en canter it away till I come to the limit of my race—God grant that I may take the right side of the winning post!—and then cheerfully looking back on the honest folks with whom I have been happy, I shall say or sing, 'Sae merry as we a' hae been!' and raising my last looks to the whole human race, the last words of the voice of 'Coila,'* shall be, 'Good night, and joy be wi' you a'!' So much for my last words: now for a few present remarks, as they have occurred at random on looking over your list.

The first lines of 'The last time I came o'er the moor,' and several other lines in it, are beautiful; but in my opinion—pardon me, revered shade of Ramsay!—the song is unworthy of the divine air. I shall try to make or mend. 'For ever, fortune, wilt thou prove,' is a charming song.

* Burns here calls himself the "Voice of Coila," in imitation of Ossian, who denominates himself the "Voice of Cona." 'Sae merry as we a' hae been,' and 'Good night, and joy be wi' you a',' are the names of two Scottish tunes.—*Currie.*

but 'Logan burn and Logan braes,' are sweetly susceptible of rural imagery: I'll try that likewise, and, if I succeed, the other song may class among the English ones. I remember the two last lines of a verse in some of the old songs of 'Logan Water' (for I know a good many different ones) which I think pretty.

"Now my dear lad maun face his foes,
Far, far frae me and Logan braes."

'My Patie is a lover gay,' is unequal. 'His mind is never muddy,' is a muddy expression indeed.

"Then I'll resign and marry Pate,
And syne my cockernony."—

This is surely far unworthy of Ramsay, or your book. My song, 'Rigs of Barley,' to the same tune does not altogether please me; but if I can mend it, and thrash a few loose sentiments out of it, I will submit it to your consideration. 'The lass o' Patie's Mill' is one of Ramsay's best songs; but there is one loose sentiment in it, which my much-valued friend Mr Erskine will take into his critical consideration. In Sir J. Sinclair's statistical volumes, are two claims, one, I think, from Aberdeenshire, and the other from Ayrshire, for the honour of this song. The following anecdote, which I had from the present Sir William Cunningham of Robertland, who had it of the late John, Earl of Loudon, I can, on such authorities, believe:

Allan Ramsay was residing at Loudon-castle with the then Earl, father to Earl John; and one forenoon, riding, or walking out together, his Lordship and Allan passed a sweet romantic spot on Irvine water, still called, "Patie's Mill," where a bonnie lass was "tedding hay, bareheaded on the green." My Lord observed to Allan, that it would be a fine theme for a song. Ramsay took the hint, and lingering behind, he composed the first sketch of it, which he produced at dinner.

'One day I heard Mary say,' is a fine song; but, for consistency's sake, alter the name "Adonis." Were there ever such banns published, as a purpose of marriage between

Adonis and Mary? I agree with you that my song, 'There's nought but care on every hand,' is much superior to 'Poortith cauld.' The original song, 'The Mill, Mill, O,' though excellent, is, on account of delicacy, inadmissible; still I like the title, and think a Scottish song would suit the notes best; and let your chosen song, which is very pretty, follow as an English set. 'The banks of the Dee,' is, you know, literally 'Langolee,' to slow time. The song is well enough, but has some false imagery in it: for instance,

"And sweetly the nightingale sung from the tree."

In the first place, the nightingale sings in a low bush, but never from a tree; and in the second place, there never was a nightingale seen, or heard on the banks of the Dee, or on the banks of any other river in Scotland. Exotic rural imagery is always comparatively flat. If I could hit on another stanza, equal to 'The small birds rejoice,' &c., I do myself honestly avow, that I think it a superior song.* 'John Anderson, my jo'—the song to this tune in Johnson's Museum, is my composition, and I think it not my worst: if it suit you, take it and welcome. Your collection of sentimental and pathetic songs, is, in my opinion, very complete; but not so your comic ones. Where are 'Tullochgorum,' 'Lumps o' puddin,' 'Tibbie Fowler,' and several others, which, in my humble judgment, are well worthy of preservation? There is also one sentimental song of mine in the Museum, which never was known out of the immediate neighbourhood, until I got it taken down from a country girl's singing. It is called 'Cragieburn Wood;' and in the opinion of Mr Clarke, is one of the sweetest Scottish songs. He is quite an enthusiast about it: and I would take his taste in Scottish music against the taste of most connoisseurs.

* It will be found, in the course of this correspondence, that the Bard produced a second stanza of 'The Chevalier's Lament,' (to which he here alludes,) worthy of the first.—*Currie.*

You are quite right in inserting the last five in your list, though they are certainly Irish. 'Shepherds, I have lost my love!' is to me a heavenly air—what would you think of a set of Scottish verses to it? I have made one to it a good while ago, but in its original state it is not quite a lady's song. I inclose an altered, not amended copy for you, if you choose to set the tune to it, and let the Irish verses follow.*

Mr Erskine's songs are all pretty, but his 'Lone Vale' is divine.

Yours, &c.

Let me know just how you like these random hints.

No. XX.

MR THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, *April*, 1793.

I REJOICE to find, my dear Sir, that ballad-making continues to be your hobby-horse. Great pity 'twould be were it otherwise. I hope you will amble it away for many a year, and "witch the world with your horsemanship."

I know there are a good many lively songs of merit that I have not put down in the list sent you; but I have them all in my eye. 'My Patie is a lover gay,' though a little

* Mr Thomson, it appears, did not approve of this song, even in its altered state. It does not appear in the correspondence; but it is probably one to be found in his MSS. beginning,

"Yestreen I got a pint of wine,
A place where body saw na;
Yestreen lay on this breast of mine,
The gowden locks of Anna."

It is highly characteristic of our Bard, but the strain of sentiment does not correspond with the air to which he proposes it should be allied.—*Currie.*

unequal, is a natural and very pleasing song, and I humbly think we ought not to displace or alter it, except the last stanza.*

No. XXI.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

April, 1793.

I HAVE yours, my dear Sir, this moment. I shall answer it and your former letter, in my desultory way of saying whatever comes uppermost.

The business of many of our tunes wanting, at the beginning, what fiddlers call a starting-note, is often a rub to us poor rhymers.

> "There's braw, braw lads on Yarrow braes,
> That wander thro' the blooming heather,"

you may alter to

> "Braw, braw lads on Yarrow braes,
> Ye wander, &c."

My song, 'Here awa, there awa,' as amended by Mr Erskine, I entirely approve of, and return you.†

Give me leave to criticise your taste in the only thing in which it is, in my opinion, reprehensible. You know I ought to know something of my own trade. Of pathos, sentiment, and point, you are a complete judge; but there is a quality more necessary than either in a song, and which is the very essence of a ballad, I mean simplicity:

* The original letter from Mr Thomson contains many observations on the Scottish songs, and on the manner of adapting the words to the music, which, at his desire, are suppressed. The subsequent letter of Mr Burns refers to several of these observations.—*Currie.*

† The reader has already seen that Burns did not finally adopt all of Mr Erskine's alterations.—*Currie.*

now, if I mistake not, this last feature you are a little apt to sacrifice to the foregoing.

Ramsay, as every other poet, has not been always equally happy in his pieces; still I cannot approve of taking such liberties with an author as Mr W. proposes doing with 'The last time I came o'er the moor.' Let a poet, if he chooses, take up the idea of another, and work it into a piece of his own; but to mangle the works of the poor bard, whose tuneful tongue is now mute for ever, in the dark and narrow house,—by Heaven, 'twould be sacrilege! I grant that Mr W.'s version is an improvement; but I know Mr W. well, and esteem him much; let him mend the song, as the Highlander mended his gun; he gave it a new stock, a new lock, and a new barrel.

I do not, by this, object to leaving out improper stanzas, where that can be done without spoiling the whole. One stanza in 'The lass o' Patie's Mill,' must be left out: the song will be nothing worse for it. I am not sure if we can take the same liberty with 'Corn rigs are bonnie.' Perhaps it might want the last stanza, and be the better for it. 'Cauld kail in Aberdeen,' you must leave with me yet a while. I have vowed to have a song to that air, on the lady whom I attempted to celebrate in the verses, 'Poortith cauld and restless love.' At any rate my other song, 'Green grow the rashes,' will never suit. That song is current in Scotland under the old title, and to the merry old tune of that name, which, of course, would mar the progress of your song to celebrity. Your book will be the standard of Scots songs for the future: let this idea ever keep your judgment on the alarm.

I send a song on a celebrated toast in this country, to suit 'Bonnie Dundee.' I send you also a ballad to the 'Mill, Mill, O.'*

* The song to the tune of 'Bonnie Dundee,' is that in No. XVI. The ballad to the 'Mill, Mill, O,' is that beginning,

"When wild war's deadly blasts are blawn." *Currie.*

'The last time I came o'er the moor,' I would fain attempt to make a Scots song for, and let Ramsay's be the English set. You shall hear from me soon. When you go to London on this business, can you come by Dumfries? I have still several MS. Scots airs by me, which I have picked up, mostly from the singing of country lasses. They please me vastly; but your learned *lugs** would perhaps be displeased with the very feature for which I like them. I call them simple; you would pronounce them silly. Do you know a fine air called 'Jackie Hume's Lament?' I have a song of considerable merit to that air. I'll inclose you both the song and tune, as I had them ready to send to Johnson's Museum.† I send you likewise, to me, a beautiful little air, which I had taken down from *viva voce*.‡ Adieu.

No. XXII.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

April, 1793.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HAD scarcely put my last letter into the post office, when I took up the subject of 'The last time I came o'er the moor,' and ere I slept drew the outlines of the foregoing. How far I have succeeded, I leave on this, as on every other occasion, to you to decide. I own my vanity is flattered, when you give my songs a place in your elegant and superb work; but to be of service to the work is my first wish. As I have often told you, I do not in a

* Ears.

† The song here mentioned is that given in No. XVIII. 'O ken ye what Meg o' the mill has gotten?' This song is surely Mr Burns's own writing, though he does not generally praise his own songs so much.—*Note by Mr Thomson.*

‡ The air here mentioned is that for which he wrote the ballad of 'Bonnie Jean.' See No. XXVII.

single instance wish you, out of compliment to me, to insert any thing of mine. One hint let me give you—what ever Mr Pleyel does, let him not alter one iota of the original Scottish airs: I mean in the song department; but let our national music preserve its native features. They are, I own, frequently wild and irreducible to the more modern rules; but on that very eccentricity, perhaps, depends a great part of their effect.

No. XXIII.

MR THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 26*th April*, 1793.

I HEARTILY thank you, my dear Sir, for your last two letters, and the songs which accompanied them. I am always both instructed and entertained by your observations; and the frankness with which you speak out your mind, is to me highly agreeable. It is very possible I may not have the true idea of simplicity in composition. I confess there are several songs, of Allan Ramsay's for example, that I think silly enough, which another person, more conversant than I have been with country people, would perhaps call simple and natural. But the lowest scenes of simple nature will not please generally, if copied precisely as they are. The poet, like the painter, must select what will form an agreeable as well as a natural picture. On this subject it were easy to enlarge; but, at present, suffice it to say, that I consider simplicity, rightly understood, as a most essential quality in composition, and the groundwork of beauty in all the arts. I will gladly appropriate your most interesting new ballad, 'When wild war's deadly blast,' &c. to the 'Mill, Mill, O,' as well as the two other songs to their respective airs; but the third and fourth lines of the first verse must undergo some little al-

teration in order to suit the music. Pleyel does not alter a single note of the songs. That would be absurd indeed! With the airs which he introduces into the sonatas, I allow him to take such liberties as he pleases; but that has nothing to do with the songs.

P. S.—I wish you would do as you proposed with your 'Rigs of Barley.' If the loose sentiments are thrashed out of it, I will find an air for it; but as to this there is no hurry.

No. XXIV.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

June, 1793.

When I tell you, my dear Sir, that a friend of mine, in whom I am much interested, has fallen a sacrifice to these accursed times, you will easily allow that it might unhinge me for doing any good among ballads. My own loss, as to pecuniary matters, is trifling; but the total ruin of a much-loved friend, is a loss indeed. Pardon my seeming inattention to your last commands.

I cannot alter the disputed lines in the 'Mill, Mill, O.'* What you think a defect, I esteem as a positive beauty;

* The lines were the third and fourth:

"Wi' mony a sweet babe fatherless,
And mony a widow mourning."

As our poet had maintained a long silence, and the first number of Mr Thomson's Musical Work was in the press, this gentleman ventured, by Mr Erskine's advice, to substitute for them in that publication,

"And eyes again with pleasure beam'd
That had been bleared with mourning."

Though better suited to the music, these lines are inferior to the original. This is the only alteration adopted by Mr Thomson, which Burns did not approve, or at least assent to.—*Currie.*

so you see how doctors differ. I shall now, with as much alacrity as I can muster, go on with your commands.

You know Frazer, the hautboy-player in Edinburgh—he is here, instructing a band of music for a fencible corps quartered in this country. Among many of his airs that please me, there is one, well-known as a reel, by the name of 'The Quaker's wife;' and which I remember a grand aunt of mine used to sing, by the name of 'Liggeram Cosh, my bonnie wee lass.' Mr Frazer plays it slow, and with an expression that quite charms me. I became such an enthusiast about it, that I made a song for it, which I here subjoin, and inclose Frazer's set of the tune. If they hit your fancy, they are at your service; if not, return me the tune, and I will put it in Johnson's Museum. I think the song is not in my worst manner.

'BLYTHE HAE I BEEN.

Tune—"Liggeram Cosh."

Blithe hae I been on yon hill,
As the lambs before me;
Careless ilka thought and free,
As the breeze flew o'er me:
Now nae langer sport and play,
Mirth or sang can please me;
Lesley is sae fair and coy,
Care and anguish seize me.

Heavy, heavy is the task,
Hopeless love declaring:
Trembling, I dow nocht but glow'r,
Sighing, dumb, despairing!
If she winna ease the thraws
In my bosom swelling;
Underneath the grass-green sod,
Soon maun be my dwelling.

I should wish to hear how this pleases you.

No. XXV.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

25th June, 1793.

HAVE you ever, my dear Sir, felt your bosom ready to burst with indignation on reading of those mighty villains who divide kingdom against kingdom; desolate provinces, and lay nations waste, out of the wantonness of ambition, or often from still more ignoble passions? In a mood of this kind to-day, I recollected the air of 'Logan Water;' and it occurred to me that its querulous melody probably had its origin from the plaintive indignation of some swelling, suffering heart, fired at the tyrannic strides of some public destroyer; and overwhelmed with private distress, the consequence of a country's ruin. If I have done any thing at all like justice to my feelings, the following song, composed in three-quarters of an hour's meditation in my elbow chair, ought to have some merit.

LOGAN BRAES.*

Tune—"Logan Water."

O Logan, sweetly didst thou glide,
That day I was my Willie's bride;
And years sinsyne hae o'er us run,
Like Logan to the simmer sun.

* The original of this song is a curious old ballad, sung in Ettrick Forest to this day, owing to the number of gentlemen once of that district who figure in it. It is all about the courting of the heiress of Logan Water. There is a good deal of sly humour in it. I remember only a very few of the wooers, whom I shall mention; for this lady was the identical 'Tibby Fowler o' the Glen.'

There liveth a squire in Holms Water head,
And he is on to visit me;
And he came in at the Meer Cleuch head,
Wi' his spotted grews, and his spaniels three.

But now thy flow'ry banks appear
Like drumlie winter, dark and drear,
While my dear lad maun face his faes,
Far, far frae me and Logan braes.

This squire he said he wanted a sheep,
And a whole eared gimmer he supposed her to be;
But I trow she's turned to a twinter ewe,
And he's never be the laird o' the Logan-lee.

I have a braw wooer from Dryhope tower,
Not far from the side of the St Marie;
His cheeks they are blae wi' the supping o' the whey,
And he's never be the laird o' the Logan-lee.

Young Justilaw has ewe-milkers enew,
Wi' their coats a' kiltit aboon the knee;
But amang them a' he may take his wale,
For he's never be the laird o' the Logan-lee.

And Ettrickha' is a squire sharp,
But sae he didna kithe to me;
For weel he might hae had what I darena name,
And syne been the laird o' the Logan-lee.

She was ultimately married, according to the ballad, to John Linton, a young farmer of Henderland.—H.

Mr John Mayne, author of the 'Sillar gun,' printed in the Star newspaper, of May 23, 1789, the following lines to 'Logan braes,' which have become deservedly popular:

"By Logan streams that rin sae deep,
Fu' aft wi' glee I've herded sheep:
I've herded sheep, or gathered slaes,
Wi' my dear lad on Logan braes.
But waes my heart thae days are gane,
And fu' o' grief I herd my lane;
While my dear lad maun face his faes,
Far, far frae me and Logan braes.

"Nae mair at Logan kirk will he
Atween the preachings meet wi' me—
Meet wi' me, or when it's mirk,
Convoy me hame frae Logan kirk.
I weel may sing thae days are gane,
Frae kirk and fair I come my lane;

Again the merry month o' May
Has made our hills and valleys gay ;
The birds rejoice in leafy bowers,
The bees hum round the breathing flowers :
Blithe morning lifts his rosy eye,
And evening's tears are tears of joy :
My soul, delightless, a' surveys,
While Willie's far frae Logan braes.

Within yon milk-white hawthorn bush,
Amang her nestlings sits the thrush ;
Her faithfu' mate will share her toil,
Or wi' his song her cares beguile :
But I, wi' my sweet nurslings here,
Nae mate to help, nae mate to cheer,
Pass widow'd nights, and joyless days,
While Willie's far frae Logan braes.

O wae upon you, men o' state,
That brethren rouse to deadly hate!
As ye make mony a fond heart mourn,
Sae may it on your heads return!
How can your flinty hearts enjoy
The widow's tears, the orphan's cry? *
But soon may peace bring happy days,
And Willie hame to Logan braes!

Do you know the following beautiful little fragment, in Witherspoon's collection of Scots songs?

While my dear lad maun face his faes,
Far, far frae me and Logan braes." M.

*. Originally,

" Ye mind na, 'mid your cruel joys,
The widow's tears, the orphan's cries."

Air—"Hughie Graham."

O gin my love were yon red rose,
That grows upon the castle wa';
And I mysel' a drap o' dew,
Into her bonnie breast to fa'!

Oh, there beyond expression blest,
I'd feast on beauty a' the night;
Seal'd on her silk-saft faulds to rest,
Till fley'd awa by Phœbus' light.*

* This beautiful fragment first appeared in Herd's Collection of Scottish ballads and songs. A perfect copy of the old song has been supplied to us by Mr Buchan, as recovered by him from tradition, in the North of Scotland, which we subjoin:—

O gin my luvie were a' in a stoupie,
And syne gin I were sent for barm,
The cauldest time that ever I was,
A kiss o' my luvie would keep me warm.
My bonnie luvie, she's little, she's little,
And my bonnie luvie, she's little and wee;
But when I look to her weel made middle,
I think that my luvie will fancy me.

O gin my luvie were a' in a pockie,
And syne gin I were sent for meal,
The sickest time that ever I was,
A kiss o' my luvie would make me weel.
My bonnie luvie, &c.

O gin my luvie were a' in a coffer,
And I mysell had the keys to keep,
Nineteen times in a winter night,
Into my bonnie luve I would creep.
My bonnie luvie, &c.

O gin my luvie were a bonnie red rose,
Grown at the foot o' yon castle wa';
And I mysel a drap o' dew,
Down on my bonnie luve's breast to fa'.
My bonnie luvie, &c.

This thought is inexpressibly beautiful; and quite, so far as I know, original. It is too short for a song, else I would forswear you altogether unless you gave it a place. I have often tried to eke a stanza to it, but in vain. After balancing myself for a musing five minutes, on the hind-legs of my elbow-chair, I produced the following.

The verses are far inferior to the foregoing, I frankly confess; but if worthy of insertion at all, they might be first in place; as every poet, who knows any thing of his trade, will husband his best thoughts for a concluding stroke.

O were my love yon lilac fair,
Wi' purple blossoms to the spring;
And I, a bird to shelter there,
When wearied on my little wing.

How I wad mourn, when it was torn,
By autumn wild, and winter rude!
But I wad sing on wanton wing,
When youthfu' May its bloom renew'd.

Oh, there beyond expression blest,
I'd feast on beauty a' the night;
Seal'd on her silk-saft faulds to rest,
Till fley'd awa by Phœbus light.
My bonnie luvie, &c.

O gin my luve were a turtle dove,
Flying about frae tree to tree,
And I mysell a single blackbird,
I'd fly and bear her company.
My bonnie luvie, &c.

Another version of the above, purporting to be from the woman, by way of answer to it, Mr Buchan informs us, is also current in the North, but which, he adds, it is unnecessary to give. —M.

No. XXVI.

MR THOMSON TO BURNS.

Monday, 1st July, 1793.

I AM extremely sorry, my good Sir, that any thing should happen to unhinge you. The times are terribly out of tune; and when harmony will be restored, Heaven knows.

The first book of songs, just published, will be despatched to you along with this. Let me be favoured with your opinion of it frankly and freely.

I shall certainly give a place to the song you have written for the 'Quaker's Wife;' it is quite enchanting. Pray will you return the list of songs with such airs added to it as you think ought to be included. The business now rests entirely on myself, the gentlemen who originally agreed to join the speculation having requested to be off. No matter, a loser I cannot be. The superior excellence of the work will create a general demand for it as soon as it is properly known. And were the sale even slower than it promises to be, I should be somewhat compensated for my labour, by the pleasure I shall receive from the music. I cannot express how much I am obliged to you for the exquisite new songs you are sending me; but thanks, my friend, are a poor return for what you have done: as I shall be benefited by the publication, you must suffer me to inclose a small mark of my gratitude,* and to repeat it afterwards when I find it convenient. Do not return it, for, by Heaven, if you do, our correspondence is at an end: and though this would be no loss to you, it would mar the publication, which under your auspices cannot fail to be respectable and interesting.

* £5.

Wednesday Morning.

I THANK you for your delicate additional verses to the old fragment, and for your excellent song to 'Logan Water:' Thomson's truly elegant one will follow for the English singer. Your apostrophe to statesmen is admirable; but I am not sure if it is quite suitable to the supposed gentle character of the fair mourner who speaks it.

No. XXVII.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

July 2d, 1793.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HAVE just finished the following ballad, and, as I do think it in my best style, I send it you. Mr Clarke, who wrote down the air from Mrs Burns's wood-note wild, is very fond of it, and has given it a celebrity by teaching it to some young ladies of the first fashion here. If you do not like the air enough to give it a place in your collection, please return it. The song you may keep, as I remember it.

BONNIE JEAN.*

There was a lass, and she was fair,
At kirk and market to be seen,
When a' the fairest maids were met,
The fairest maid was bonny Jean.

* Mr Cunningham says, Miss Jean M'Murdo, the eldest daughter of John M'Murdo, Esq. of Drumlanrig, was the heroine of this exquisite song; and his evidence must be conclusive, as he states that the original MS. presented by the poet to the family was in his possession. Others have stated her to be Miss Miller of Dalswinton, but without adducing any proof.—M.

And aye she wrought her mammie's wark,
And aye she sang sae merrilie:
The blithest bird upon the bush
Had ne'er a lighter heart than she.

But hawks will rob the tender joys
That bless the little lintwhite's nest;
And frost will blight the fairest flowers,
And love will break the soundest rest.

Young Robie was the brawest lad,
The flower and pride of a' the glen;
And he had owsen, sheep, and kye,
And wanton naigies nine or ten.

He gaed wi' Jeanie to the tryste,
He danc'd wi' Jeanie on the down;
And lang ere witless Jeanie wist,
Her heart was tint, her peace was stown.

As in the bosom o' the stream,
The moon-beam dwells at dewy e'en;
So trembling, pure, was tender love
Within the breast o' bonnie Jean.*

And now she works her mammie's wark,
And aye she sighs wi' care and pain;
Yet wist na what her ail might be,
Or what wad mak her weel again.

But did na Jeanie's heart loup light,
And did na joy blink in her e'e,
As Robie tauld a tale o' love
Ae e'enin on the lily lea?

* In the original MS. our poet asks Mr Thomson if this stanza is not original?—*Currie.*

The sun was sinking in the west,
The birds sang sweet in ilka grove;
His cheek to hers he fondly prest,
And whisper'd thus his tale o' love:

O Jeanie fair, I lo'e thee dear;
O canst thou think to fancy me;
Or wilt thou leave thy mammie's cot,
And learn to tent the farms wi' me?

At barn or byre thou shalt na drudge,
Or naething else to trouble thee;
But stray amang the heather-bells,
And tent the waving corn wi' me.

Now what could artless Jeanie do?
She had nae will to say him na:
At length she blush'd a sweet consent,
And love was aye between them twa.

I have some thoughts of inserting in your index, or in my notes, the names of the fair ones, the themes of my songs. I do not mean the name at full; but dashes or asterisms, so as ingenuity may find them out.

The heroine of the foregoing is Miss M., daughter to Mr M. of D., one of your subscribers. I have not painted her in the rank which she holds in life, but in the dress and character of a cottager.

No. XXVIII.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

July, 1793.

I ASSURE you, my dear Sir, that you truly hurt me with your pecuniary parcel. It degrades me in my own eyes.

However, to return it would savour of affectation ; but as to any more traffic of that debtor and creditor kind, I swear by that HONOUR which crowns the upright statue of ROBERT BURNS'S INTEGRITY—on the least motion of it, I will indignantly spurn the by-past transaction, and from that moment commence entire stranger to you! BURNS'S character for generosity of sentiment and independence of mind, will, I trust, long outlive any of his wants which the cold unfeeling ore can supply; at least, I will take care that such a character he shall deserve.

Thank you for my copy of your publication. Never did my eyes behold, in any musical work, such elegance and correctness. Your preface, too, is admirably written; only your partiality to me has made you say too much: however, it will bind me down to double every effort in the future progress of the work. The following are a few remarks on the songs in the list you sent me. I never copy what I write to you, so I may be often tautological, or perhaps contradictory.

'The Flowers of the Forest' is charming as a poem, and should be, and must be, set to the notes; but, though out of your rule, the three stanzas, beginning,

"I hae seen the smiling o' fortune beguiling,"

are worthy of a place, were it but to immortalize the author of them, who is an old lady of my acquaintance, and at this moment living in Edinburgh. She is a Mrs Cockburn; I forget of what place; but from Roxburghshire. What a charming apostrophe is

"O fickle fortune, why this cruel sporting,
Why, why torment us—poor sons of a day!"

The old ballad, 'I wish I were where Helen lies,' is silly to contemptibility.* My alteration of it in Johnson's is not

* There is a copy of this ballad given in the account of the Parish of Kirkpatrick-Fleeming, (which contains the tomb of fair Helen Irvine,) in the Statistics of Sir John Sinclair, vol. XIII. p. 275, to which this character is certainly not applicable.

much better. Mr Pinkerton, in his, what he calls, ancient ballads, (many of them notorious, though beautiful enough forgeries,) has the best set. It is full of his own interpolations,—but no matter.

That our readers may judge for themselves, we shall here give the ballad of 'Fair Helen' entire, with the story of the lovers, as related in the Statistics:—"In the burial-ground of Kirkconnell, are still to be seen the tomb-stones of Fair Helen, and her favourite lover Adam Fleeming. She was a daughter of the family of Kirkconnell, and fell a victim to the jealousy of a lover. Being courted by two young gentlemen at the same time, the one of whom thinking himself slighted, vowed to sacrifice the other to his resentment, when he again discovered him in her company. An opportunity soon presented itself, when the faithful pair, walking along the romantic banks of the Kirtle, were discovered from the opposite banks by the assassin. Helen perceiving him lurking among the bushes, and dreading the fatal resolution, rushed to her lover's bosom, to rescue him from the danger; and thus receiving the wound intended for another, sunk and expired in her favourite's arms. He immediately revenged her death, and slew the murderer. The inconsolable Adam Fleeming, now sinking under the pressure of grief, went abroad and served under the banners of Spain, against the infidels. The impression, however, was too strong to be obliterated. The image of woe attended him thither; and the pleasing remembrance of the tender scenes that were past, with the melancholy reflection, that they could never return, harassed his soul, and deprived his mind of repose. He soon returned, and stretching himself on her grave, expired, and was buried by her side. Upon the tomb-stone are engraven a sword and cross, with 'Hic jacet Adam Fleeming.' The memory of this is only preserved in an old Scots ballad, which relates the tragical event, and which is said to have been written by Adam Fleeming, when in Spain. As the piece is little known, and affords a pretty good specimen of the vulgar dialect spoken at present in this country, which must have undergone little variation for upwards of 200 years, it is sent for insertion.

FAIR HELEN.

A TRAGICAL OLD SCOTS SONG.

My sweetest sweet, and fairest fair,
Of birth and worth beyond compare,
Thou art the causer of my cair,
Since first I loved thee:

In my next I will suggest to your consideration a few songs which may have escaped your hurried notice. In the mean time, allow me to congratulate you now, as a brother of the quill. You have *committed* your character and

---

Yet God hath given to me a mind,
The which to thee shall prove as kind,
As any one that thou wilt find,
Of high or low degree.

Yet nevertheless I am content,
And ne'er a whit my love repent;
But think my time it was well spent,
Though I disdained be.

The shall'est water makes maist din,
The deepest pool the deadest lin,
The richest man least truth within,
Though he disdained be.

O Helen fair, without compare,
I'll wear a garland of thy hair,
Shall cover me for ever mair,
Until the day I die.

O Helen sweet, and maist complete,
My captive spirit's at thy feet;
Think'st thou still fit thus for to treat,
Thy pris'ner with cruelty?

O Helen brave! this still I crave,
On thy poor slave some pity have,
And do him save, that's near his grave,
And dies for love of thee.

Curst be the hand that shot the shot,
Likewise the gun that gave the crack,
Into my arms bird Helen lap,
And died for love of me.

O think na' ye my heart was sair,
My love sank down, and spak na mair,
There did she swoon wi' meikle cair,
On fair Kirkconnell lee.

fame; which will now be tried, for ages to come, by the illustrious jury of the SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF TASTE—all whom poesy can please, or music charm.

Being a bard of nature, I have some pretensions to second sight; and I am warranted by the spirit to foretell and affirm, that your great-grand child will hold up your volumes, and say with honest pride, "This so much admired selection was the work of my ancestor."

I lighted down, my sword did draw,
I cutted him in pieces sma',
I cutted him in pieces sma',
On fair Kirkconnell lee.

O Helen chaste! thou wert modest,
Were I with thee I would be blest,
Where thou ly'st low, and tak'st thy rest
On fair Kirkconnell lee.

I wish I were where I have been,
Embracing of my love Helen,
At Venus' games we've been right keen,
On fair Kirkconnell lee.

I wish my grave were growing green,
A winding sheet put o'er my een,
And I in Helen's arms lying,
On fair Kirkconnell lee.

I wish I were where Helen lies,
Where night and day she on me cries;
I wish I were where Helen lies,
On fair Kirkconnell lee. M.

No. XXIX.

MR THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 1*st August*, 1793.

DEAR SIR,

I HAD the pleasure of receiving your last two letters, and am happy to find you are quite pleased with the appearance of the first book. When you come to hear the songs sung and accompanied, you will be charmed with them.

'The bonnie brucket Lassie,' certainly deserves better verses, and I hope you will match her. 'Cauld Kail in Aberdeen,'—'Let me in this ae night,' and several of the livelier airs, wait the muse's leisure: these are peculiarly worthy of her choice gifts: besides, you'll notice, that in airs of this sort, the singer can always do greater justice to the poet, than in the slower airs of 'The Bush aboon Traquair,' 'Lord Gregory,' and the like; for in the manner the latter were frequently sung, you must be contented with the sound, without the sense. Indeed both the airs and words are disguised by the very slow, languid, psalm-singing style in which they are too often performed: they lose animation and expression altogether, and instead of speaking to the mind, or touching the heart, they cloy upon the ear, and set us a yawning!

Your ballad, 'There was a lass, and she was fair,' is simple and beautiful, and shall undoubtedly grace my collection.

No. XXX.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

August, 1793.

MY DEAR THOMSON,

I HOLD the pen for our friend Clarke, who at present is studying the music of the spheres at my elbow. The Georgium Sidus he thinks is rather out of tune; so until he rectify that matter, he cannot stoop to terrestrial affairs.

He sends you six of the Rondeau subjects, and if more are wanted, he says you shall have them.

Confound your long stairs!

S. CLARKE.

No. XXXI.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

August, 1793.

YOUR objection, my dear Sir, to the passages in my song of 'Logan Water,' is right in one instance; but it is difficult to mend it: if I can I will. The other passage you object to does not appear in the same light to me.

I have tried my hand on 'Robin Adair,' and you will probably think, with little success; but it is such a cursed, cramp, out-of-the-way measure, that I despair of doing any thing better to it.

PHILLIS THE FAIR.

Tune—"Robin Adair."

While larks with little wing,
Fann'd the pure air,
Tasting the breathing spring,
Forth I did fare;

Gay the sun's golden eye,
Peep'd o'er the mountains high;
Such thy morn! did I cry,
  Phillis the fair.

In each bird's careless song,
  Glad did I share;
While yon wild flowers among,
  Chance led me there:
Sweet to the opening day,
Rosebuds bent the dewy spray;
Such thy bloom! did I say,
  Phillis the fair.

Down in a shady walk,
  Doves cooing were:
I mark'd the cruel hawk
  Caught in a snare;
So kind may fortune be,
Such make his destiny,
He who would injure thee,
  Phillis the fair.

So much for namby-pamby. I may, after all, try my hand on it in Scots verse. There I always find myself most at home.

I have just put the last hand to the song I meant for 'Cauld kail in Aberdeen.' If it suits you to insert it, I shall be pleased, as the heroine is a favourite of mine; if not, I shall also be pleased; because I wish, and will be glad, to see you act decidedly on the business. 'Tis a tribute as a man of taste, and as an editor, which you owe yourself.

No. XXXII.

MR THOMSON TO BURNS.

August, 1793.

My good Sir,

I consider it one of the most agreeable circumstances attending this publication of mine, that it has procured me so many of your much valued epistles. Pray make my acknowledgments to St Stephen for the tunes; tell him I admit the justness of his complaint on my stair-case, conveyed in his laconic postscript to your *jeu d'esprit*, which I perused more than once, without discovering exactly whether your discussion was music, astronomy, or politics; though a sagacious friend, acquainted with the convivial habits of the poet and the musician, offered me a bet of two to one, you were just drowning care together; that an empty bowl was the only thing that would deeply affect you, and the only matter you could then study how to remedy!

I shall be glad to see you give 'Robin Adair' a Scottish dress. Peter is furnishing him with an English suit for a change, and you are well matched together. Robin's air is excellent, though he certainly has an out-of-the-way measure as ever poor Parnassian wight was plagued with. I wish you would invoke the muse for a single elegant stanza to be substituted for the concluding objectionable verses of 'Down the burn Davie,' so that this most exquisite song may no longer be excluded from good company.

Mr Allan has made an inimitable drawing from your 'John Anderson, my Jo,' which I am to have engraved as a frontispiece to the humorous class of songs; you will be quite charmed with it, I promise you. The old couple are seated by the fireside. Mrs Anderson in great good humour is clapping John's shoulders, while he smiles and looks at her with such glee, as to show that he fully re-

collects the pleasant days and nights when they were "first acquent." The drawing would do honour to the pencil of Teniers.*

No. XXXIII.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

August, 1793.

THAT crinkum-crankum tune, 'Robin Adair,' has run so in my head, and I succeeded so ill in my last attempt, that I have ventured in this morning's walk, one essay more. You, my dear Sir, will remember an unfortunate part of our worthy friend Cunningham's story, which happened about three years ago. That struck my fancy, and I endeavoured to do the idea justice as follows:

HAD I A CAVE.

Tune—"Robin Adair."

HAD I a cave on some wild, distant shore,
Where the winds howl to the waves' dashing roar;
There would I weep my woes,
There seek my lost repose,
Till grief my eyes should close,
Ne'er to wake more.

* Mr Cunningham, in his recent edition of the poet's works, differs *toto cœlo* from the opinion of Mr Thomson, as to the design and execution of this engraving, and we think with justice: Mr Cunningham says, "the Mrs Anderson on whom this praise is bestowed is what the old ballad calls

'A carlin—a rig-widdie carlin,'

and seems fitter for a wife to him of Linkumdoddie than to be spouse to cantie and douce John. She has the look of an ogress: her nose resembles a ramhorn, and the fingers which she is about to apply to her husband's lyart-locks are as hard as lobster-claws."—M.

Falsest of womankind, canst thou declare,
All thy fond-plighted vows—fleeting as air!
To thy new lover hie,
Laugh o'er thy perjury,
Then in thy bosom try
What peace is there!

By the way, I have met with a musical Highlander in Breadalbane's Fencibles, which are quartered here, who assures me that he well remembers his mother's singing Gaelic songs to both 'Robin Adair,' and 'Gramachree.' They certainly have more of the Scotch than Irish taste in them.

This man comes from the vicinity of Inverness: so it could not be any intercourse with Ireland that could bring them;—except, what I shrewdly suspect to be the case, the wandering minstrels, harpers, and pipers, used to go frequently errant through the wilds both of Scotland and Ireland, and so some favourite airs might be common to both. A case in point—they have lately, in Ireland, published an Irish air, as they say, called 'Caun du delish.' The fact is, in a publication of Corri's, a great while ago, you will find the same air, called a Highland one, with a Gaelic song set to it. Its name there, I think, is 'Oran Gaoil,' and a fine air it is. Do ask honest Allan, or the Rev. Gaelic parson,* about these matters.

No. XXXIV.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

August, 1793.

MY DEAR SIR,

'LET me in this ae night,' I will reconsider. I am glad that you are pleased with my song, 'Had I a cave,' &c. as I liked it myself.

* The Gaelic parson referred to, was, we are informed, the Rev. Joseph Robertson Macgregor.

I walked out yesterday evening with a volume of the Museum in my hand, when, turning up 'Allan Water,' "What numbers shall the muse repeat," &c. as the words appeared to me rather unworthy of so fine an air, and recollecting that it is on your list, I sat and raved under the shade of an old thorn, till I wrote one to suit the measure. I may be wrong; but I think it not in my worst style. You must know, that in Ramsay's Tea-table, where the modern song first appeared, the ancient name of the tune, Allan says, is 'Allan Water,' or 'My love Annie's very bonnie.' This last has certainly been a line of the original song; so I took up the idea, and, as you will see, have introduced the line in its place, which I presume it formerly occupied; though I likewise give you a choosing line, if it should not hit the cut of your fancy:—

BY ALLAN STREAM.

By Allan-stream I chanc'd to rove,
While Phœbus sank beyond Benledi;*
The winds were whispering thro' the grove,
The yellow corn was waving ready:
I listen'd to a lover's sang,
And thought on youthfu' pleasures many;
And aye the wild-wood echoes rang—
O dearly do I love thee, Annie!†

O happy be the woodbine bower,
Nae nightly bogle make it eerie;
Nor ever sorrow stain the hour,
The place and time I met my dearie!
Her head upon my throbbing breast,
She, sinking, said, "I'm thine for ever!"
While mony a kiss the seal imprest,
The sacred vow, we ne'er should sever.

* A mountain west of Strath-Allan, 3,009 feet high.—R. B.
† Or, "O my love Annie's very bonnie."—R. B.

The haunt o' spring's the primrose brae,
The simmer joys the flocks to follow:
How cheery thro' her shortening day,
Is autumn in her weeds o' yellow!
But can they melt the glowing heart,
Or chain the soul in speechless pleasure,
Or through each nerve the rapture dart,
Like meeting her, our bosom's treasure?

Bravo! say I: it is a good song. Should you think so too, (not else,) you can set the music to it, and let the other follow as English verses.

Autumn is my propitious season. I make more verses in it than all the year else.

God bless you!

No. XXXV.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

August, 1793.

Is 'Whistle and I'll come to you, my lad,' one of your airs? I admire it much; and yesterday I set the following verses to it. Urbani, whom I have met with here, begged them of me, as he admires the air much; but as I understand that he looks with rather an evil eye on your work, I did not choose to comply. However, if the song does not suit your taste, I may possibly send it him. The set of the air which I had in my eye is in Johnson's Museum.

O WHISTLE AND I'LL COME TO YOU.

O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad,
O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad;
Tho' father and mither and a' should gae mad,
O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad.

But warily tent, when you come to court me,
And come na unless the back-yett be a-jee;
Syne up the back-stile and let naebody see,
And come as ye were na comin to me,
And come as ye were na comin to me.

At kirk, or at market, whene'er ye meet me,
Gang by me as though that ye car'd na a flie;
But steal me a blink o' your bonnie black e'e,
Yet look as ye were na lookin at me,
Yet look as ye were na lookin at me.
O whistle, &c.

Aye vow and protest that ye care na for me,
And whyles ye may lightly my beauty a wee;
But court nae anither, though jokin ye be,
For fear that she wyle your fancy frae me,
For fear that she wyle your fancy frae me.
O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad,
O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad;
Tho' father and mither and a' should gae mad,
O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad.*

Another favourite air of mine is, 'The muckin o' Geordie's byre.' When sung slow with expression, I have wished that it had had better poetry; that I have endeavoured to supply as follows:—

ADOWN WINDING NITH.

Adown winding Nith I did wander,
To mark the sweet flowers as they spring;

* In some of the MSS. the four first lines of this song run thus:

"O whistle, and I'll come to thee, my jo,
O whistle, and I'll come to thee, my jo;
Tho' father and mother and a' should say no,
O whistle, and I'll come to thee, my jo." *Currie.*

Adown winding Nith I did wander,
Of Phillis to muse and to sing.
Awa wi' your belles and your beauties,
They never wi' her can compare
Whaever has met wi' my Phillis,
Has met wi' the queen o' the fair.

The daisy amus'd my fond fancy,
So artless, so simple, so wild;
Thou emblem, said I, o' my Phillis!
For she is simplicity's child.
Awa' wi' your belles, &c.

The rose bud's the blush o' my charmer,
Her sweet balmy lip when 'tis prest:
How fair and how pure is the lily,
But fairer and purer her breast.
Awa wi' your belles, &c.

Yon knot of gay flowers in the arbour,
They ne'er wi' my Phillis can vie;
Her breath is the breath o' the woodbine,
Its dew-drop o' diamond, her eye.
Awa wi' your belles, &c.

Her voice is the song of the morning,
That wakes thro' the green-spreading grove,
When Phœbus peeps over the mountains,
On music, and pleasure, and love.
Awa wi' your belles, &c.

But beauty how frail and how fleeting,
The bloom of a fine summer's day!
While worth in the mind o' my Phillis
Will flourish without a decay.
Awa wi' your belles and your beauties,
They never wi' her can compare;

Whaever has met wi' my Phillis,
Has met wi' the queen o' the fair.*

Mr Clarke begs you to give Miss Phillis a corner in your book, as she is a particular flame of his. She is a Miss Phillis M'Murdo, sister to "Bonnie Jean." They are both pupils of his. You shall hear from me, the very first grist I get from my rhyming-mill.

No. XXXVI.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

August, 1793.

THAT tune, 'Cauld Kail,' is such a favourite of yours, that I once more roved out yesterday for a gloamin-shot at the muses;† when the muse that presides o'er the shores of Nith, or rather my old inspiring dearest nymph, Coila, whispered me the following. I have two reasons for thinking that it was my early, sweet simple inspirer that was by my elbow, "smooth gliding without step," and pouring the song on my glowing fancy. In the first place, since I left Coila's native haunts, not a fragment of a poet has arisen to cheer her solitary musings, by catching inspiration from her; so I more than suspect that she has followed me hither, or at least makes me occasional visits: secondly,

* "This song, certainly beautiful," says Mr Currie, "would appear to more advantage without the chorus; as is indeed the case with several other songs of our author." The heroine was Miss Phillis M'Murdo, afterward Mrs Norman Lockhart, of Carnwath.—M.

† Gloamin—twilight, probably from glooming. A beautiful poetic word which ought to be adopted in England. A gloamin-shot, a twilight interview.—*Currie.*

The word is now adopted by the best writers of the English language, as a peculiarly sweet and poetical synonyme.—M.

the last stanza of this song I send you, is the very words that Coila taught me many years ago, and which I set to an old Scots reel in Johnson's Museum.

COME, LET ME TAKE THEE.

Air—"Cauld Kail."

Come, let me take thee to my breast,
And pledge we ne'er shall sunder;
And I shall spurn as vilest dust
The warld's wealth and grandeur:
And do I hear my Jeanie own,
That equal transports move her?
I ask for dearest life alone
That I may live to love her.

Thus in my arms, wi' all thy charms,
I clasp my countless treasure;
I'll seek nae mair o' heaven to share,
Than sic a moment's pleasure:
And by thy een, sae bonnie blue,
I swear I'm thine for ever!
And on thy lips I seal my vow
And break it shall I never!

If you think the above will suit your idea of your favourite air, I shall be highly pleased. 'The last time I came o'er the moor,' I cannot meddle with, as to mending it; and the musical world have been so long accustomed to Ramsay's words, that a different song, though positively superior, would not be so well received. I am not fond of choruses to songs, so I have not made one for the foregoing.

No. XXXVII.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

August, 1793.

DAINTY DAVIE.*

Now rosy May comes in wi' flowers,
To deck her gay, green-spreading bowers;
And now comes in my happy hours,
To wander wi' my Davie.
Meet me on the warlock knowe,
Dainty Davie, dainty Davie,
There I'll spend the day wi' you,
My ain dear dainty Davie.

The crystal waters round us fa',
The merry birds are lovers a',
The scented breezes round us blaw,
A wandering wi' my Davie.
Meet me, &c.

When purple morning starts the hare,
To steal upon her early fare,
Then thro' the dews I will repair,
To meet my faithfu' Davie.
Meet me, &c.

When day, expiring in the west,
The curtain draws o' nature's rest,
I flee to his arms I lo'e best,
And that's my ain deär Davie.

* Burns published another set of this in the Musical Museum, which will be found in a previous volume. The present is a great improvement on his first essay.—M.

Meet me on the warlock knowe,
Bonnie Davie, dainty Davie;
There I'll spend the day wi' you,
My ain dear dainty Davie.*

So much for Davie. The chorus, you know, is to the low part of the tune. See Clarke's set of it in the Museum.

N. B. In the Museum they have drawled out the tune to twelve lines of poetry, which is damned nonsense. Four lines of song, and four of chorus, is the way.

No. XXXVIII.

MR THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 1*st Sept.* 1793.

MY DEAR SIR,

SINCE writing you last, I have received half a dozen songs, with which I am delighted beyond expression. The humour and fancy of 'Whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad,' will render it nearly as great a favourite as 'Duncan Gray.' 'Come, let me take thee to my breast,'—'Adown winding Nith,' and 'By Allan stream,' &c., are full of imagination and feeling, and sweetly suit the airs for which they are intended. 'Had I a cave on some wild distant shore,' is a striking and affecting composition. Our friend, to whose story it refers, reads it with a swelling heart, I assure you. The union we are now forming, I think, can never be broken; these songs of yours will descend with

* Dainty Davie is the title of an old Scotch song, from which Burns has taken nothing but the title and the measure.—*Currie.*

The song was founded on the well-known intrigue of Mr David Williamson, a covenanting preacher, with the lady of Cherry-trees' daughter, into whose bed the reverend gentleman had bestowed himself for safety, when pursued by a party of dragoons.—M.

the music to the latest posterity, and will be fondly cherished so long as genius, taste, and sensibility exist in our island.

While the muse seems so propitious, I think it right to inclose a list of all the favours I have to ask of her, no fewer than twenty and three! I have burdened the pleasant Peter with as many as it is probable he will attend to: most of the remaining airs would puzzle the English poet not a little; they are of that peculiar measure and rhythm, that they must be familiar to him who writes for them.

No. XXXIX.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

Sept. 1793.

You may readily trust, my dear Sir, that any exertion in my power is heartily at your service. But one thing I must hint to you; the very name of Peter Pindar is of great service to your publication, so get a verse from him now and then; though I have no objection, as well as I can, to bear the burden of the business.

You know that my pretensions to musical taste are merely a few of nature's instincts, untaught and untutored by art. For this reason, many musical compositions, particularly where much of the merit lies in counterpoint, however they may transport and ravish the ears of you connoisseurs, affect my simple lug no otherwise than merely as melodious din. On the other hand, by way of amends, I am delighted with many little melodies, which the learned musician despises as silly and insipid. I do not know whether the old air 'Hey tuttie taitie,' may rank among this number; but well I know that, with Frazer's hautboy, it has often filled my eyes with tears. There is a tradition, which I have met with in many places in Scotland, that it was Robert Bruce's march at the battle of Bannockburn.

This thought, in my solitary wanderings, warmed me to a pitch of enthusiasm on the theme of liberty and independence, which I threw into a kind of SCOTTISH ode, fitted to the air, that one might suppose to be the gallant ROYAL SCOT's address to his heroic followers on that eventful morning.*

BRUCE TO HIS MEN AT BANNOCKBURN.

Tune—"Hey, tuttie taitie."

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led;
Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to victorie!

Now's the day, and now's the hour:
See the front o' battle lower;
See approach proud Edward's power—
Chains and slavery!

Wha will be a traitor-knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave?
Let him turn and flee!

Wha for Scotland's king and law
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Free-man stand, or free-man fa',
Let him follow me!

By oppression's woes and pains!
By your sons in servile chains!
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they shall be free!

* This noble strain was conceived by our poet during a storm among the wilds of Glen-Ken in Galloway. A more finished copy will be found afterwards.—*Currie.*

Lay the proud usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty's in every blow!—
Let us do, or die!

So may God ever defend the cause of truth and liberty, as he did that day!—Amen.

P. S. I showed the air to Urbani, who was highly pleased with it, and begged me to make soft verses for it; but I had no idea of giving myself any trouble on the subject, till the accidental recollection of that glorious struggle for freedom, associated with the glowing ideas of some other struggles of the same nature, not quite so ancient, roused my rhyming mania. Clarke's set of the tune, with his bass, you will find in the Museum; though I am afraid that the air is not what will entitle it to a place in your elegant selection.

No. XL.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

Sept. 1793.

I DARE say, my dear Sir, that you will begin to think my correspondence is persecution. No matter, I can't help it; a ballad is my hobby-horse; which, though otherwise a simple sort of harmless idiotical beast enough, has yet this blessed headstrong property, that when once it has fairly made off with a hapless wight, it gets so enamoured with the tinkle-gingle, tinkle-gingle of its own bells, that it is sure to run poor pilgarlic, the bedlam-jockey, quite beyond any useful point or post in the common race of man.

The following song I have composed for 'Oran-gaoil,' the Highland air, that, you tell me in your last, you have resolved to give a place to in your book. I have this mo-

ment finished the song, so you have it glowing from the mint. If it suit you, well!—if not, 'tis also well!

BEHOLD THE HOUR.*

Tune—"Oran-gaoil."

Behold the hour, the boat arrive;
Thou goest, thou darling of my heart!
Sever'd from thee can I survive?
But fate has will'd, and we must part.
I'll often greet this surging swell,
Yon distant isle will often hail:

* The heroine of this parting soliloquy is said to have been Clarinda, alias M'Ilhose, alias the young and fair Edinburgh lady, to whom Burns addressed so many flattering compliments in his love-inspired moments. As he is the fittest person to express his own feelings, we quote the following:—

Before I saw Clarinda's face,
My heart was blythe and gay,
Free as the wind, or feathered race
That hop from spray to spray.

But now dejected I appear,
Clarinda proves unkind;
I sighing, drop the silent tear,
But no relief can find.

In plaintive notes my tale rehearses
When I the fair have found;
On every tree appear my verses
That to her praise resound.

But she ungrateful shuns my sight,
My faithful love disdains,
My vows and tears her scorn excite,
Another happy reigns.

Ah, though my looks betray,
I envy your success;
Yet love to friendship shall give way,
I cannot wish it less. B.

"E'en here I took the last farewell;
There latest mark'd her vanish'd sail."

Along the solitary shore,
While flitting sea-fowl round me cry,
Across the rolling, dashing roar,
I'll westward turn my wistful eye;
Happy, thou Indian grove, I'll say,
Where now my Nancy's path may be!
While thro' thy sweets she loves to stray,
O tell me, does she muse on me!

No. XLI.

MR THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, *5th Sept.* 1793.

I BELIEVE it is generally allowed that the greatest modesty is the sure attendant of the greatest merit. While you are sending me verses that even Shakspeare might be proud to own, you speak of them as if they were ordinary productions! Your heroic ode is to me the noblest composition of the kind in the Scottish language. I happened to dine yesterday with a party of your friends, to whom I read it. They were all charmed with it; entreated me to find out a suitable air for it, and reprobated the idea of giving it a tune so totally devoid of interest or grandeur as 'Hey tuttie taitie.' Assuredly your partiality for this tune must arise from the ideas associated in your mind by the tradition concerning it, for I never heard any person, and I have conversed again and again with the greatest enthusiasts for Scottish airs, I say, I never heard any one speak of it as worthy of notice.

I have been running over the whole hundred airs, of which I lately sent you the list; and I think 'Lewie Gor-

don' is most happily adapted to your ode: at least with a very slight variation of the fourth line, which I shall presently submit to you. There is in 'Lewie Gordon' more of the grand than the plaintive, particularly when it is sung with a degree of spirit, which your words would oblige the singer to give it. I would have no scruple about substituting your ode in the room of 'Lewie Gordon,' which has neither the interest, the grandeur, nor the poetry that characterize your verses. Now the variation I have to suggest upon the last line of each verse, the only line too short for the air, is as follows:

Verse 1st, Or to *glorious* victorie.
2d, *Chains*—chains and slaverie.
3d, Let him, *let him* turn and flie.
4th, Let him *bravely* follow me.
5th, But *they shall*, they shall be free.
6th, Let us, *let us* do, or die!

If you connect each line with its own verse, I do not think you will find that either the sentiment or the expression loses any of its energy. The only line which I dislike in the whole of the song is, "Welcome to your gory bed." Would not another word be preferable to "welcome?" In your next I will expect to be informed whether you agree to what I have proposed. The little alterations I submit with the greatest deference.

The beauty of the verses you have made for 'Oran-gaoil' will ensure celebrity to the air.

No. XLII.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

Sept. 1793.

I HAVE received your list, my dear Sir, and here go my observations on it.*

'Down the burn Davie.' I have this moment tried an alteration, leaving out the last half of the third stanza, and the first half of the last stanza, thus:

As down the burn they took their way,
And thro' the flowery dale;
His cheek to hers he aft did lay,
And love was aye the tale.

With "Mary, when shall we return,
Sic pleasure to renew?"
Quoth Mary, "Love, I like the burn,
And aye shall follow you."†

'Thro' the wood laddie'—I am decidedly of opinion that both in this, and 'There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame,' the second or high part of the tune being a repetition of the first part an octave higher, is only for instrumental music, and would be much better omitted in singing.

* Mr Thomson's list of songs for his publication. In his remarks the bard proceeds in order, and goes through the whole; but on many of them he merely signifies his approbation. All his remarks of any importance are presented to the reader.—*Currie.*

† This alteration Mr Thomson has adopted (or at least intended to adopt,) instead of the last stanza of the original song, which is objectionable in point of delicacy.—*Currie.*

'Cowden-knowes.' Remember in your index that the song in pure English to this tune, beginning,

"When summer comes, the swains on Tweed,"

is the production of Crawford. Robert was his Christian name.

'Laddie lie near me,' must lie by me for some time. I do not know the air; and until I am complete master of a tune, in my own singing (such as it is,) I can never compose for it. My way is: I consider the poetic sentiment correspondent to my idea of the musical expression; then choose my theme; begin one stanza; when that is composed, which is generally the most difficult part of the business, I walk out, sit down now and then, look out for objects in nature around me that are in unison and harmony with the cogitations of my fancy, and workings of my bosom; humming every now and then the air with the verses I have framed. When I feel my muse beginning to jade, I retire to the solitary fire-side of my study, and there commit my effusions to paper; swinging at intervals on the hind legs of my elbow-chair, by way of calling forth my own critical strictures, as my pen goes on. Seriously, this, at home, is almost invariably my way.

What cursed egotism!

'Gill Morice,' I am for leaving out. It is a plaguy length; the air itself is never sung; and its place can well be supplied by one or two songs for fine airs that are not in your list. For instance, 'Cragieburn Wood,' and 'Roy's Wife.' The first, beside its intrinsic merit, has novelty; and the last has high merit as well as great celebrity. I have the original words of a song for the last air, in the hand-writing of the lady who composed it; and they are superior to any edition of the song which the public has yet seen.*

'Highland-laddie.' The old set will please a mere Scotch ear best; and the new an Italianized one. There is a

* This song, so much admired by our bard, will be found in a future part of the volume, see No. XLIV.

third, and what Oswald calls the old 'Highland-laddie,' which pleases me more than either of them. It is sometimes called 'Ginglan Johnnie;' it being the air of an old humorous tawdry song of that name. You will find it in the Museum, 'I hae been at Crookieden,' &c. I would advise you in this musical quandary, to offer up your prayers to the muses for inspiring direction; and in the mean time, waiting for this direction, bestow a libation to Bacchus; and there is not a doubt but you will hit on a judicious choice. *Probatum est.*

'Auld Sir Simon,' I must beg you to leave out, and put in its place 'The Quaker's Wife.'

'Blithe hae I been o'er the hill,' is one of the finest songs ever I made in my life; and besides, is composed on a young lady, positively the most beautiful, lovely woman in the world. As I purpose giving you the names and designations of all my heroines, to appear in some future edition of your work, perhaps half a century hence, you must certainly include 'The bonniest lass in a' the warld,' in your collection.

'Dainty Davie,' I have heard sung nineteen thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine times, and always with the chorus to the low part of the tune; and nothing has surprised me so much as your opinion on this subject. If it will not suit as I proposed, we will lay two of the stanzas together, and then make the chorus follow.

'Fee him, Father'—I inclose you Frazer's set of this tune when he plays it slow; in fact he makes it the language of despair. I shall here give you two stanzas, in that style; merely to try if it will be any improvement. Were it possible, in singing, to give it half the pathos which Frazer gives it in playing, it would make an admirably pathetic song. I do not give these verses for any merit they have. I composed them at the time in which "Patie Allan's mither died, that was, about the back o' midnight;" and by the lee-side of a bowl of punch, which had overset every mortal in company, except the hautbois and the muse.

THOU HAST LEFT ME EVER.

Tune—"Fee him, Father."

Thou hast left me ever, Jamie,
Thou hast left me ever;
Thou hast left me ever, Jamie,
Thou hast left me ever.
Aften hast thou vow'd that death
Only should us sever;
Now thou'st left thy lass for aye,—
I maun see thee never, Jamie,
I'll see thee never.*

Thou hast me forsaken, Jamie,
Thou hast me forsaken;
Thou hast me forsaken, Jamie,
Thou hast me forsaken.
Thou canst love anither jo,
While my heart is breaking:
Soon my weary een I'll close—
Never mair to waken, Jamie,
Ne'er mair to waken.†

'Jockie and Jenny' I would discard, and in its place would put 'There's nae luck about the house,' which has a very pleasant air, and which is positively the finest love-ballad in that style in the Scottish, or perhaps in any other language. 'When she came ben she bobbet,' as an air, is more beautiful than either, and in the *andante* way would unite with a charming sentimental ballad.

* The Scottish (the Editor uses the word substantively, as the English,) employ the abbreviation *I'll* for *I shall* as well as *I will*; and it is for *I shall* it is used here. In Annandale, as in the northern counties of England, for *I shall* they use *I'se*.—*Currie.*

† This is the whole of the song. The bard never proceeded farther.—*Note by Mr Thomson.*

'Saw ye my Father?' is one of my greatest favourites. The evening before last, I wandered out, and began a tender song, in what I think is its native style. I must premise, that the old way, and the way to give most effect, is to have no starting note, as the fiddlers call it, but to burst at once into the pathos. Every country girl sings—'Saw ye my father?' &c.

My song is but just begun; and I should like, before I proceed, to know your opinion of it. I have sprinkled it with the Scottish dialect, but it may be easily turned into correct English.*

'Todlin hame.' Urbani mentioned an idea of his, which has long been mine, that this air is highly susceptible of pathos: accordingly, you will soon hear him at your concert try it to a song of mine in the Museum; 'Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon.' One song more and I have done: 'Auld lang syne.' The air is but mediocre; but the following song, the old song of the olden times, and which has never been in print, nor even in manuscript, until I took it down from an old man's singing, is enough to recommend any air.

AULD LANG SYNE.

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to min'?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And days o' lang syne?
For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.

We twa hae run about the braes,
And pu't the gowans fine;

* This song appears afterwards. It begins,
"Where are the joys I hae met in the morning."

But we've wander'd mony a weary foot,
Sin auld lang syne.
For auld, &c.

We twa hae paidl't i' the burn,
Frae morning sun till dine:
But seas between us braid hae roar'd,
Sin auld lang syne.
For auld, &c.

And here's a hand, my trusty fiere,
And gie's a hand o' thine;
And we'll tak a right guid willie-waught,
For auld lang syne.
For auld, &c.

And surely ye'll be your pint-stowp,
And surely I'll be mine;
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne.
For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.*

* This song, of the olden time, is excellent. It is worthy of our bard.— *Currie.*

We subjoin the earliest copy of this song that we have ever met with, taken from a broadside printed before 1700; from which it will be seen, that, notwithstanding the poet's resolute disclaimer, the merits of his version are peculiarly his own:—

AULD LANGSYNE.

To its own proper tune.

Should auld acquaintance be forgot
And never thought upon,
The flames of love extinguished,
And freely past and gone;

Now, I suppose I have tired your patience fairly. You must, after all is over, have a number of ballads, properly so called. 'Gill Morice,' 'Tranent Muir,' 'M'Pherson's Farewell,' 'Battle of Sheriff Muir,' or 'We ran and they

---

Is thy kind heart, now grown so cold,
In that loving breast of thine,
That thou can'st never once reflect
On auld langsyne?

Where are thy protestations—
Thy vows and oaths, my dear,
Thou made to me, and I to thee,
In register yet clear:
Is faith and truth so violate
To the immortal gods divine,
That thou can'st never once reflect
On auld langsyne?

Is't *Cupid's* fears, or frostie cares,
That makes thy sp'rits decay?
Or is't some object of more worth
That's stolen thy heart away?
Or some desert makes thee neglect
Her once so much was thine,
That thou can'st never once reflect
On auld langsyne?

Is't worldly cares so desperate
That makes thee to despair?
Is't that makes thee exasperate,
And makes thee to forbear?
If thou of that were free as I,
Thou surely should be mine,
And then, of new, we would renew
Kind auld langsyne.

But since that nothing can prevail,
And all hope now is vain,
From these rejected eyes of mine,
Still showers of tears shall rain:
And though thou hast me now forgot,
Yet I'll continue thine,
Yea, though thou hast me now forgot,
And auld langsyne.

ran,' (I know the author of this charming ballad, and his history,) 'Hardiknute,' 'Barbara Allan,' (I can furnish a finer set of this tune than any that has yet appeared,) and besides, do you know that I really have the old tune to which 'The Cherry and the Slae' was sung; and which is mentioned as a well-known air in Scotland's Complaint, a book published before poor Mary's days. It was then called 'The Banks o' Helicon:' an old poem which Pinkerton has brought to light. You will see all this in Tytler's history of Scottish music. The tune, to a learned ear, may have no great merit: but it is a great curiosity. I have a good many original things of this kind.

No. XLIII.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

Sept. 1793.

I AM happy, my dear Sir, that my ode pleases you so much. Your idea, "honour's bed," is, though a beautiful, a hackneyed idea; so, if you please, we will let the line stand as it is. I have altered the song as follows:

BANNOCKBURN.

ROBERT BRUCE'S ADDRESS TO HIS ARMY.

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled;
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led;

If e'er I have a house, my dear,
That's truly called mine,
And can afford but country cheer,
Or aught that's good therein:
Tho' thou were rebel to the King,
And beat with wind and rain,
Thou'rt sure thyself of welcome, love,
For auld langsyne. M.

Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to glorious victorie.

Now's the day, and now's the hour;
See the front o' battle lower;
See approach proud Edward's power—
Edward! chains and slaverie!

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave?
Traitor! coward! turn and flee!

Wha for Scotland's king and law
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Free-man stand, or free-man fa',
Caledonian! on wi' me!

By oppression's woes and pains!
By your sons in servile chains!
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they shall be—shall be free!

Lay the proud usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty's in every blow!
Forward! let us do, or die!

N. B.—I have borrowed the last stanza from the common stall edition of Wallace:—

> "A false usurper sinks in every foe,
> And liberty returns with every blow."

A couplet worthy of Homer. Yesterday you had enough of my correspondence. The post goes and my head aches miserably. One comfort! I suffer so much, just now, in this world, for last night's joviality, that I shall escape scot-free for it in the world to come. Amen.

No. XLIV.

MR THOMSON TO BURNS.

12th September, 1703.

A THOUSAND thanks to you, my dear Sir, for your observations on the list of my songs. I am happy to find your ideas so much in unison with my own respecting the generality of the airs, as well as the verses. About some of them we differ, but there is no disputing about hobby-horses. I shall not fail to profit by the remarks you make, and to reconsider the whole with attention.

'Dainty Davie' must be sung, two stanzas together, and then the chorus: 'tis the proper way. I agree with you, that there may be something of pathos, or tenderness at least, in the air of 'Fee him, Father,' when performed with feeling: but a tender cast may be given almost to any lively air, if you sing it very slowly, expressively, and with serious words. I am, however, clearly and invariably for retaining the cheerful tunes joined to their own humorous verses, wherever the verses are passable. But the sweet song for 'Fee him, Father,' which you began about the back of midnight, I will publish as an additional one. Mr James Balfour, the king of good-fellows, and the best singer of the lively Scottish ballads that ever existed, has charmed thousands of companies with 'Fee him, Father,' and with 'Todlin hame' also, to the old words, which never should be disunited from either of these airs.—Some Bacchanals I would wish to discard. 'Fy, let's a' to the Bridal,' for instance, is so coarse and vulgar, that I think it fit only to be sung in a company of drunken colliers; and 'Saw ye my Father?' appears to me both indelicate and silly.

One word more with regard to your heroic ode. I think, with great deference to the poet, that a prudent general would avoid saying any thing to his soldiers which might tend to make death more frightful than it is. "Gory" pre-

sents a disagreeable image to the mind; and to tell them "Welcome to your gory bed," seems rather a discouraging address, notwithstanding the alternative which follows. I have shown the song to three friends of excellent taste, and each of them objected to this line, which emboldens me to use the freedom of bringing it again under your notice. I would suggest,

"Now prepare for honour's bed,
Or for glorious victorie."

No. XLV.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

September, 1793.

"WHO shall decide when doctors disagree?" My ode pleases me so much that I cannot alter it. Your proposed alterations would, in my opinion, make it tame. I am exceedingly obliged to you for putting me on reconsidering it; as I think I have much improved it. Instead of "soger! hero!" I will have it "Caledonian! on wi' me!"

I have scrutinized it over and over; and to the world some way or other it shall go as it is. At the same time it will not in the least hurt me, should you leave it out altogether, and adhere to your first intention of adopting Logan's verses.*

* Mr Thomson has very properly adopted this song (if it may be so called) as the bard presented it to him. He has attached it to the air of "Lewie Gordon," and perhaps among the existing airs he could not find a better; but the poetry is suited to a much higher strain of music, and may employ the genius of some Scottish Handel, if any such should in future arise. The reader will have observed, that Burns adopted the alterations proposed by his friend and correspondent in former instances, with great readiness; perhaps, indeed, on all indifferent occasions. In the present instance, however, he rejected them, though repeatedly urged, with determined resolution. With every respect for the

I have finished my song to 'Saw ye my Father?' and in English, as you will see. That there is a syllable too much for the expression of the air, is true; but, allow me to say, that the mere dividing of a dotted crotchet into a crotchet and a quaver, is not a great matter: however, in that I have no pretensions to cope in judgment with you. Of the poetry I speak with confidence; but the music is a business where I hint my ideas with the utmost diffidence.

judgment of Mr Thomson and his friends, we may be satisfied that he did so. He who in preparing for an engagement, attempts to withdraw his imagination from images of death, will probably have but imperfect success, and is not fitted to stand in the ranks of battle, where the liberties of a kingdom are at issue. Of such men the conquerors of Bannockburn were not composed. Bruce's troops were inured to war, and familiar with all its sufferings and dangers. On the eve of that memorable day, their spirits were without doubt wound up to a pitch of enthusiasm suited to the occasion,—a pitch of enthusiasm at which danger becomes attractive, and the most terrific forms of death are no longer terrible. Such a strain of sentiment, this heroic "welcome" may be supposed well calculated to elevate,—to raise their hearts high above fear, and to nerve their arms to the utmost pitch of mortal exertion. These observations might be illustrated and supported by a reference to the martial poetry of all nations, from the spirit-stirring strains of Tyrtæus, to the war-song of General Wolfe. Mr Thomson's observation, that "Welcome to your gory bed, is a discouraging address," seems not sufficiently considered. Perhaps, indeed, it may be admitted, that the term "gory" is somewhat objectionable, not on account of its presenting a frightful, but a disagreeable image to the mind. But a great poet, uttering his conceptions on an interesting occasion, seeks always to present a picture that is vivid, and is uniformly disposed to sacrifice the delicacies of taste on the altar of the imagination. And it is the privilege of superior genius, by producing a new association, to elevate expressions that were originally low, and thus to triumph over the deficiencies of language. In how many instances might this be exemplified from the works of our immortal Shakspeare:—

> "Who would fardels bear,
> To groan and sweat under a weary life;—
> When he himself might his quietus make
> With a bare bodkin?"

It were easy to enlarge, but to suggest such reflections is probably sufficient.—*Currie.*

The old verses have merit, though unequal, and are popular: my advice is to set the air to the old words, and let mine follow as English verses. Here they are:—

FAIR JENNY.

Tune—"Saw ye my Father?"

Where are the joys I have met in the morning,
That danc'd to the lark's early song?
Where is the peace that awaited my wand'ring,
At evening the wild woods among?

No more a-winding the course of yon river,
And marking sweet flow'rets so fair:
No more I trace the light footsteps of pleasure,
But sorrow and sad sighing care.

Is it that summer's forsaken our valleys,
And grim surly winter is near?
No, no, the bees humming round the gay roses,
Proclaim it the pride of the year.

Fain would I hide what I fear to discover,
Yet long, long too well have I known,
All that has caused this wreck in my bosom,
Is Jenny, fair Jenny alone.

Time cannot aid me, my griefs are immortal,
Nor hope dare a comfort bestow:
Come then, enamour'd and fond of my anguish,
Enjoyment I'll seek in my wo.

Adieu, my dear Sir! the post goes, so I shall defer some other remarks until more leisure.

No. XLVI.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

September, 1793.

I HAVE been turning over some volumes of songs, to find verses whose measures would suit the airs for which you have allotted me to find English songs.

For 'Muirland Willie,' you have, in Ramsay's Tea-table, an excellent song, beginning, 'Ah, why those tears in Nelly's eyes?' As for 'The Collier's dochter,' take the following old Bacchanal:—

DELUDED SWAIN, THE PLEASURE.

Deluded swain, the pleasure
The fickle fair can give thee,
Is but a fairy treasure,
Thy hopes will soon deceive thee.

The billows on the ocean,
The breezes idly roaming,
The clouds' uncertain motion,
They are but types of woman.

O! art thou not ashamed,
To doat upon a feature?
If man thou would'st be named,
Despise the silly creature.

Go find an honest fellow;
Good claret set before thee;
Hold on till thou art mellow,
And then to bed in glory.

The faulty line in Logan-Water, I mend thus:

"How can your flinty hearts enjoy,
The widow's tears, the orphan's cry?"

The song otherwise will pass. As to 'M'Gregoira Rua-Ruth,' you will see a song of mine to it, with a set of the air superior to yours in the Museum. Vol. ii. p. 181. The song begins,

"Raving winds around her blowing."

Your Irish airs are pretty, but they are downright Irish. If they were like the 'Banks of Banna,' for instance, though really Irish, yet in the Scottish taste, you might adopt them. Since you are so fond of Irish music, what say you to twenty-five of them in an additional number? We could easily find this quantity of charming airs; I will take care that you shall not want songs; and I assure you that you would find it the most saleable of the whole. If you do not approve of 'Roy's Wife,' for the music's sake, we shall not insert it. 'Deil tak the wars,' is a charming song; so is, 'Saw ye my Peggy?' 'There's nae luck about the house,' well deserves a place. I cannot say that 'O'er the hills and far awa,' strikes me as equal to your selection. 'This is no my ain house,' is a great favourite air of mine; and if you will send me your set of it, I will task my muse to her highest effort. What is your opinion of 'I hae laid a herrin in sawt?' I like it much. Your Jacobite airs are pretty: and there are many others of the same kind, pretty; but you have not room for them. You cannot, I think, insert 'Fie, let's a' to the bridal,' to any other words than its own.

What pleases me, as simple and *naive*, disgusts you as ludicrous and low. For this reason, 'Fie, gie me my coggie, Sirs,' 'Fie, let's a' to the bridal,' with several others of that cast, are to me highly pleasing; while, 'Saw ye my Father, or saw ye my mother?' delights me with its descriptive simple pathos. Thus my song, 'Ken ye what Meg o' the mill has gotten?' pleases myself so much, that I cannot try my hand at another song to the air; so I shall

not attempt it. I know you will laugh at all this; but, "Ilka man wears his belt his ain gait."*

No. XLVII.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

October, 1793.

Your last letter, my dear Thomson, was indeed laden with heavy news. Alas, poor Erskine!† The recollection that he was a coadjutor in your publication, has till now scared me from writing to you, or turning my thoughts on composing for you.

I am pleased that you are reconciled to the air of the 'Quaker's Wife;' though, by the bye, an old Highland gentleman, and a deep antiquarian, tells me it is a Gaelic air, and known by the name of 'Leiger m' chos.' The following verses, I hope, will please you, as an English song to the air.

Thine am I, my faithful fair,
Thine, my lovely Nancy;
Ev'ry pulse along my veins,
Ev'ry roving fancy.

To thy bosom lay my heart,
There to throb and languish:
Tho' despair had wrung its core,
That would heal its anguish.

* We agree with Burns in the criticism he has passed on these songs, much more than we do with the opinion of Thomson. That gentleman's taste was too fastidious in the matter of our elder lyrics, and not always correct.—M.

† The honourable A. Erskine, brother to Lord Kelly, whose melancholy death Mr Thomson had communicated in an excellent letter, which he has suppressed.

Take away these rosy lips,
Rich with balmy treasure:
Turn away thine eyes of love,
Lest I die with pleasure.

What is life when wanting love?
Night without a morning:
Love's the cloudless summer sun,
Nature gay adorning.

Your objection to the English song I proposed for 'John Anderson, my jo,' is certainly just. The following is by an old acquaintance of mine, and I think has merit. The song was never in print, which I think is so much in your favour. The more original good poetry your collection contains, it certainly has so much the more merit.

SONG.

BY GAVIN TURNBULL.

O condescend, dear charming maid,
My wretched state to view;
A tender swain to love betray'd,
And sad despair, by you.

While here, all melancholy,
My passion I deplore,
Yet, urg'd by stern resistless fate,
I love thee more and more.

I heard of love, and with disdain,
The urchin's power denied;
I laugh'd at every lover's pain,
And mock'd them when they sigh'd.

But how my state is alter'd!
Those happy days are o'er;
For all thy unrelenting hate,
I love thee more and more.

O yield, illustrious beauty, yield,
No longer let me mourn;

And tho' victorious in the field,
Thy captive do not scorn.

Let generous pity warm thee,
My wonted peace restore;
And, grateful, I shall bless thee still,
And love thee more and more.

The following address of Turnbull's to the Nightingale, will suit as an English song to the air, 'There was a lass and she was fair.' By the bye, Turnbull has a great many songs in MS. which I can command, if you like his manner. Possibly, as he is an old friend of mine, I may be prejudiced in his favour; but I like some of his pieces very much.

THE NIGHTINGALE.

BY G. TURNBULL.

Thou sweetest minstrel of the grove,
That ever tried the plaintive strain,
Awake thy tender tale of love,
And soothe a poor forsaken swain.

For tho' the muses deign to aid,
And teach him smoothly to complain;
Yet Delia, charming, cruel maid,
Is deaf to her forsaken swain.

All day, with fashion's gaudy sons,
In sport she wanders o'er the plain:
Their tales approves, and still she shuns
The notes of her forsaken swain.

When evening shades obscure the sky,
And bring the solemn hours again,
Begin, sweet bird, thy melody,
And soothe a poor forsaken swain.

I shall just transcribe another of Turnbull's, which would go charmingly to 'Lewie Gordon.'

LAURA.

BY G. TURNBULL.

Let me wander where I will,
By shady wood, or winding rill;
Where the sweetest May-born flowers
Paint the meadows, deck the bowers;
Where the linnet's early song
Echoes sweet the woods among;
Let me wander where I will,
Laura haunts my fancy still.

If at rosy dawn I choose,
To indulge the smiling muse;
If I court some cool retreat,
To avoid the noon-tide heat;
If beneath the moon's pale ray,
Thro' unfrequented wilds I stray;
Let me wander where I will,
Laura haunts my fancy still.

When at night the drowsy god
Waves his sleep-compelling rod,
And to fancy's wakeful eyes
Bids celestial visions rise;
While with boundless joy I rove
Thro' the fairy land of love;
Let me wander where I will,
Laura haunts my fancy still.

The rest of your letter I shall answer at some other opportunity.*

* Like all men of true genius, Burns was the least susceptible of literary jealousy, and the first to acknowledge the claims of a co-rival to poetical distinction. His goodness of heart, however, occasionally blinded his judgment; for, after a careful perusal of 'Turnbull's Essays,' we cannot conscientiously bring ourselves to believe, that the author possessed that merit which his enthusiastic and single-hearted friend, in the generosity of his nature, was willing to award to him. We honestly think Burns was, "as an old friend, prejudiced in his favour," as much as he was in the cases of Lapraik and Sillars; but what he says "he likes very much," it would be doing injustice to his memory, were we to discard what he liked from this edition of his works.

No. XLVIII.

MR THOMSON TO BURNS.

7th Nov. 1793.

My good Sir,

After so long a silence, it gave me peculiar pleasure to recognise your well-known hand, for I had begun to be apprehensive that all was not well with you. I am happy

Hence we have retained the songs of Turnbull precisely as they originally appeared in the correspondence betwixt the Poet and Mr Thomson.

Little or nothing is known of Turnbull. In 'Campbell's History of Scottish Poetry,' there appears this brief notice of the work of one, of whom Burns speaks in so flattering a manner:—

"No sooner had the Paisley press produced the poems of Mr Ebenezer Picken, than the Poetical Essays of Gavin Turnbull, in 1788, issued from the press of Mr David Niven of Glasgow. The 'Poetical Essays' of Mr Turnbull are such as do him the highest credit. I am hopeful he will go on; for, in truth, the specimens already before the public, give, so far as I understand, uncommon satisfaction. It was the peculiar felicity of Burns, on his first entrance on the literary stage, to be patronized and supported, even to a degree rarely the lot of the most consummate talents. It became for a time the *rage*, to use a fashionable phrase, to talk of him, recite his pieces, and boast of having spent an evening in company with the Ayrshire bard. No wonder then, if the contemporaries of Burns were neglected by those who are looked up to as the umpires of literary reputation. But one consolation remained; the ingenious author escaped the most poignant mortification, usually attendant on talents unaccompanied by prudence, that is, the supercilious sneer, indicative of altered opinion, and its humiliating consequence, cold indifference. Did not Burns experience all this?"

So far says Alexander Campbell, in his 'History of Poetry in Scotland,' which, be it remembered, was published at Edinburgh in 1798, and which work, we beg leave to say, is neither distinguished for the accuracy of its details, its extent of information, nor the acumen of its criticism, when any critical observations are hazarded. Campbell, we believe, meant well, but he performed ill. In one word, he was incompetent for the very laborious task which he undertook. But he is dead, and we remember the adage, "De mortuis nil nisi bonum," otherwise we might enlarge this note to a size disproportionate with its subject.—M.

to find, however, that your silence did not proceed from that cause, and that you have got among the ballads once more.

I have to thank you for your English song to 'Leiger m' choss,' which I think extremely good, although the colouring is warm. Your friend Mr Turnbull's songs have doubtless considerable merit; and as you have the command of his manuscripts, I hope you may find out some that will answer, as English songs, to the airs yet unprovided.

No. XLIX.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

December, 1793.

TELL me how you like the following verses to the tune of 'Jo Janet:'

Husband, husband, cease your strife,
Nor longer idly rave, sir;
Tho' I am your wedded wife
Yet I am not your slave, sir
"One of two must still obey,
Nancy, Nancy;
Is it man, or woman, say;
My spouse, Nancy?"

If 'tis still the lordly word,
Service and obedience;
I'll desert my sov'reign lord,
And so, good b'ye, allegiance!
"Sad will I be, so bereft,
Nancy, Nancy,
Yet I'll try to make a shift,
My spouse, Nancy."

My poor heart then break it must,
My last hour I'm near it:
When you lay me in the dust,
Think, think, how you will bear it.
"I will hope and trust in heaven,
Nancy, Nancy;
Strength to bear it will be given,
My spouse, Nancy."

Well, sir, from the silent dead,
Still I'll try to daunt you;
Ever round your midnight bed
Horrid sprites shall haunt you.
"I'll wed another, like my dear
Nancy, Nancy;
Then all hell will fly for fear,
My spouse, Nancy."

WILT THOU BE MY DEARIE?

Air—"The Sutor's Dochter."

Wilt thou be my dearie?
When sorrow wrings thy gentle heart,
Wilt thou let me cheer thee?
By the treasure of my soul,
That's the love I bear thee!
I swear and vow that only thou
Shall ever be my dearie.
Only thou, I swear and vow,
Shall ever be my dearie.

Lassie, say thou lo'es me;
Or if thou wilt na be my ain,
Say na thou'lt refuse me:
If it winna, canna be,
Thou for thine may choose me,

Let me, lassie, quickly die,
Trusting that thou lo'es me.
Lassie, let me quickly die,
Trusting that thou lo'es me.

No. L.

MR THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 17*th April*, 1794.

MY DEAR SIR,

OWING to the distress of our friend for the loss of his child, at the time of his receiving your admirable but melancholy letter, I had not an opportunity, till lately, of perusing it.* How sorry I am to find Burns saying, "Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased?" while he is delighting others from one end of the island to the other. Like the hypochondriac who went to consult a physician upon his case—"Go," says the doctor, "and see the famous Carlini, who keeps all Paris in good humour." "Alas! sir," replied the patient, "I am that unhappy Carlini!"

Your plan for our meeting together pleases me greatly, and I trust that by some means or other it will soon take place; but your Bacchanalian challenge almost frightens me, for I am a miserable weak drinker!

Allan is much gratified by your good opinion of his talents. He has just begun a sketch from your 'Cotter's Saturday Night,' and, if it pleases himself in the design, he will probably etch or engrave it. In subjects of the pastoral and humorous kind, he is, perhaps, unrivalled by any artist living. He fails a little in giving beauty and grace to his females, and his colouring is sombre, otherwise his paintings and drawings would be in greater request.

I like the music of the 'Sutor's dochter,' and will con-

* A Letter to Mr Cunningham, to be found in another volume.

sider whether it shall be added to the last volume; your verses to it are pretty; but your humorous English song, to suit 'Jo Janet,' is inimitable. What think you of the air, 'Within a mile of Edinburgh?' It has always struck me as a modern English imitation, but it is said to be Oswald's, and is so much liked, that I believe I must include it. The verses are little better than namby pamby. Do you consider it worth a stanza or two?

No. LI.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

May, 1794.

My dear Sir,

I return you the plates, with which I am highly pleased; I would humbly propose, instead of the younker knitting stockings, to put a stock and horn into his hands. A friend of mine, who is positively the ablest judge on the subject I have ever met with, and though an unknown, is yet a superior artist with the burin, is quite charmed with Allan's manner. I got him a peep of the 'Gentle Shepherd;' and he pronounces Allan a most original artist of great excellence.

For my part, I look on Mr Allan's choosing my favourite poem for his subject, to be one of the highest compliments I have ever received.

I am quite vexed at Pleyel's being cooped up in France, as it will put an entire stop to our work. Now, and for six or seven months, I shall be quite in song, as you shall see by and by. I got an air, pretty enough, composed by Lady Elizabeth Heron of Heron, which she calls 'The banks of Cree.' Cree is a beautiful romantic stream; and as her Ladyship is a particular friend of mine, I have written the following song to it:—

HERE IS THE GLEN.

Tune—"Banks of Cree."

Here is the glen, and here the bower,
All underneath the birchen shade;
The village bell has told the hour,
O what can stay my lovely maid?

'Tis not Maria's whispering call;
'Tis but the balmy-breathing gale,
Mixt with some warbler's dying fall,
The dewy star of eve to hail.

It is Maria's voice I hear!
So calls the woodlark in the grove,
His little faithful mate to cheer,
At once 'tis music—and 'tis love.

And art thou come! and art thou true!
O welcome dear to love and me!
And let us all our vows renew,
Along the flowery banks of Cree.

No. LII.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

July, 1794.

Is there no news yet of Pleyel? Or is your work to be at a dead stop, until the allies set our modern Orpheus at liberty from the savage thraldom of democratic discords? Alas the day! And woe is me! That auspicious period, pregnant with the happiness of millions.* * * * * * *

* A portion of this letter has been left out, for reasons that will be easily imagined.

I have presented a copy of your songs to the daughter of a much-valued and much-honoured friend of mine, Mr Graham of Fintry. I wrote on the blank side of the title-page the following address to the young lady:—

Here, where the Scottish muse immortal lives,
In sacred strains and tuneful numbers join'd,
Accept the gift; tho' humble he who gives,
Rich is the tribute of the grateful mind.

So may no ruffian-feeling* in thy breast,
Discordant jar thy bosom-chords among;
But peace attune thy gentle soul to rest,
Or love ecstatic wake his seraph song.

Or pity's notes, in luxury of tears,
As modest want the tale of wo reveals;
While conscious virtue all the strain endears,
And heaven-born piety her sanction seals.

No. LIII.

MR THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 10*th August*, 1794.

MY DEAR SIR,

I OWE you an apology for having so long delayed to acknowledge the favour of your last. I fear it will be as you say, I shall have no more songs from Pleyel till France and we are friends; but nevertheless, I am very desirous to be prepared with the poetry; and as the season approaches in which your muse of Coila visits you, I trust I shall, as formerly, be frequently gratified with the result of your amorous and tender interviews!

* It were to have been wished, that instead of "ruffian-feeling," the bard had used a less rugged epithet, *e. g.* "ruder."—*Currie.*

Currie was not a poet.—M.

No. LIV.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

30th August, 1794.

THE last evening, as I was straying out, and thinking of 'O'er the hills and far away,' I spun the following stanza for it; but whether my spinning will deserve to be laid up in store, like the precious thread of the silk-worm, or brushed to the devil, like the vile manufacture of the spider, I leave, my dear Sir, to your usual candid criticism. I was pleased with several lines in it at first: but I own that now it appears rather a flimsy business.

This is just a hasty sketch, until I see whether it be worth a critique. We have many sailor songs, but as far as I at present recollect, they are mostly the effusions of the jovial sailor, not the wailings of his love-lorn mistress. I must here make one sweet exception—'Sweet Annie frae the sea-beach came.' Now for the song.

ON THE SEAS AND FAR AWAY.

Tune—"O'er the hills," &c.

How can my poor heart be glad,
When absent from my sailor lad?
How can I the thought forego,
He's on the seas to meet the foe?
Let me wander, let me rove,
Still my heart is with my love;
Nightly dreams, and thoughts by day,
Are with him that's far away.
On the seas and far away,
On stormy seas and far away;
Nightly dreams, and thoughts by day,
Are aye with him that's far away.

When in summer's noon I faint,
As weary flocks around me pant,
Haply in this scorching sun
My sailor's thund'ring at his gun:
Bullets, spare my only joy!
Bullets, spare my darling boy!
Fate, do with me what you may,
Spare but him that's far away!
On the seas, &c.

At the starless midnight hour,
When winter rules with boundless power;
As the storms the forest tear,
And thunders rend the howling air,
Listening to the doubling roar,
Surging on the rocky shore,
All I can—I weep and pray,
For his weal that's far away.
On the seas, &c.

Peace, thy olive wand extend,
And bid wild war his ravage end,
Man with brother man to meet,
And as a brother kindly greet:
Then may heaven, with prosperous gales,
Fill my sailor's welcome sails,
To my arms their charge convey,
My dear lad that's far away.
On the seas and far away,
On stormy seas and far away;
Nightly dreams, and thoughts by day,
Are aye with him that's far away.

I give you leave to abuse this song, but do it in the spirit of Christian meekness.

No. LV.

MR THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 16*th Sept.* 1794.

MY DEAR SIR,

You have anticipated my opinion of 'On the seas and far away;' I do not think it one of your very happy productions, though it certainly contains stanzas that are worthy of all acceptation.

The second is the least to my liking, particularly, "Bullets, spare my only joy." Confound the bullets! It might, perhaps, be objected to the third verse, "At the starless midnight hour," that it has too much grandeur of imagery, and that greater simplicity of thought would have better suited the character of a sailor's sweet-heart. The tune, it must be remembered, is of the brisk, cheerful kind. Upon the whole, therefore, in my humble opinion, the song would be better adapted to the tune, if it consisted only of the first and last verses, with the choruses.

No. LVI.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

Sept. 1794.

I SHALL withdraw my 'On the seas and far away,' altogether: it is unequal, and unworthy the work. Making a poem is like begetting a son: you cannot know whether you have a wise man or a fool, until you produce him to the world to try him.

For that reason I send you the offspring of my brain, abortions and all; and, as such, pray look over them and forgive them, and burn them.* I am flattered at your

* This Virgilian order of the poet should, I think, be disobeyed with respect to the song in question, the second stanza excepted.—*Note by Mr Thomson.*

"Doctors differ. The objection to the second stanza does not

adopting 'Ca' the yowes to the knowes,' as it was owing to me that ever it saw the light. About seven years ago I was well acquainted with a worthy little fellow of a clergyman, a Mr Clunie, who sung it charmingly; and, at my request, Mr Clarke took it down from his singing. When I gave it to Johnson, I added some stanzas to the song, and mended others, but still it will not do for you. In a solitary stroll which I took to-day, I tried my hand on a few pastoral lines, following up the idea of the chorus, which I would preserve. Here it is, with all its crudities and imperfections on its head.

CA' THE YOWES.

Ca' the yowes to the knowes,
Ca' them whare the heather growes,
Ca' them whare the burnie rowes,
My bonnie dearie.
Hark, the mavis' evening sang
Sounding Clouden's woods amang!*
Then a faulding let us gang,
My bonnie dearie.

We'll gae down by Clouden side,
Thro' the hazels spreading wide,
O'er the waves that sweetly glide
To the moon sae clearly.
Ca' the yowes, &c.

Yonder Clouden's silent towers,
Where at moonshine midnight hours,
O'er the dewy bending flowers,
Fairies dance sae cheery.
Ca' the yowes, &c.

strike the Editor. So says Dr Currie, and so respond many as exquisite judges of poetry as Mr Thomson can pretend to be.—M.

* The river Clouden, or Cluden, a tributary stream to the Nith.

Ghaist nor bogle shalt thou fear ;
Thou'rt to love and heaven sae dear,
Nocht of ill may come thee near,
My bonnie dearie.
Ca' the yowes, &c.

Fair and lovely as thou art,
Thou hast stown my very heart ;
I can die—but canna part—
My bonnie dearie.
Ca, the yowes to the knowes,
Ca' them whare the heather growes,
Ca' them whare the burnie rowes,
My bonnie dearie.

I shall give you my opinion of your other newly adopted songs my first scribbling fit.

No. LVII.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

Sept. 1794.

Do you know a blackguard Irish song called 'Onagh's Water-fall ?' The air is charming, and I have often regretted the want of decent verses to it. It is too much, at least for my humble rustic muse, to expect that every effort of hers shall have merit ; still I think that it is better to have mediocre verses to a favourite air, than none at all. On this principle I have all along proceeded in the Scots Musical Museum, and as that publication is at its last volume, I intend the following song, to the air above-mentioned, for that work.

If it does not suit you as an editor, you may be pleased to have verses to it that you can sing before ladies.

SHE SAYS SHE LO'ES ME BEST OF A'.

Tune—"Onagh's Water-fall."

Sae flaxen were her ringlets,
  Her eye-brows of a darker hue,
Bewitchingly o'er-arching
  Twa laughing een o' bonnie blue.
Her smiling sae wyling,
  Wad make a wretch forget his woe;
What pleasure, what treasure,
  Unto these rosy lips to grow:
Such was my Chloris' bonnie face,
  When first her bonnie face I saw,
And aye my Chloris' dearest charm,
  She says she lo'es me best of a'

Like harmony her motion;
  Her pretty ancle is a spy
Betraying fair proportion,
  Wad make a saint forget the sky.
Sae warming, sae charming,
  Her faultless form and graceful air;
Ilk feature—auld nature
  Declar'd that she could do nae mair:
Hers are the willing chains o' love,
  By conquering beauty's sovereign law;
And aye my Chloris' dearest charm,
  She says she lo'es me best of a'.

Let others love the city,
  And gaudy show at sunny noon;
Gie me the lonely valley,
  The dewy eve, and rising moon
Fair beaming, and streaming,
  Her silver light the boughs amang;
While falling, recalling,
  The amorous thrush concludes his sang:

There, dearest Chloris, wilt thou rove
By wimpling burn and leafy shaw,
And hear my vows o' truth and love,
And say thou lo'es me best of a'.

Not to compare small things with great, my taste in music is like the mighty Frederick of Prussia's taste in painting: we are told that he frequently admired what the connoisseurs decried, and always without any hypocrisy confessed his admiration. I am sensible that my taste in music must be inelegant and vulgar, because people of undisputed and cultivated taste can find no merit in my favourite tunes. Still, because I am cheaply pleased, is that any reason why I should deny myself that pleasure? Many of our strathspeys, ancient and modern, give me most exquisite enjoyment, where you and other judges would probably be showing disgust. For instance, I am just now making verses for 'Rothemurche's Rant,' an air which puts me in raptures; and in fact, unless I be pleased with the tune, I never can make verses to it. Here I have Clarke on my side, who is a judge that I will pit against any of you. 'Rothemurche,' he says, is an air both original and beautiful; and on his recommendation I have taken the first part of the tune for a chorus, and the fourth or last part for the song. I am but two stanzas deep in the work, and possibly you may think, and justly, that the poetry is as little worth your attention as the music.*

I have begun anew, 'Let me in this ae night.' Do you think that we ought to retain the old chorus? I think we must retain both the old chorus and the first stanza of the old song. I do not altogether like the third line of the first stanza, but cannot alter it to please myself. I am just three stanzas deep in it. Would you have the *denouëment* to be successful or otherwise? should she "let him in" or not?

* In the original follow here two stanzas of a song, beginning "Lassie wi' the lint-white locks;" which will be found at full length afterwards.—*Currie.*

Did you not once propose 'The Sow's tail to Geordie,' as an air for your work? I am quite delighted with it; but I acknowledge that is no mark of its real excellence. I once set about verses for it, which I meant to be in the alternate way of a lover and his mistress chanting together. I have not the pleasure of knowing Mrs Thomson's christian name, and yours I am afraid is rather burlesque for sentiment, else I had meant to have made you the hero and heroine of the little piece.

How do you like the following epigram, which I wrote the other day on a lovely young girl's recovery from a fever? Doctor Maxwell was the physician who seemingly saved her from the grave; and to him I address the following.

TO DR MAXWELL,

ON MISS JESSIE STAIG'S RECOVERY.

Maxwell, if merit here you crave,
That merit I deny:
You save fair Jessy from the grave?—
An angel could not die.

God grant you patience with this stupid epistle!

No. LVIII.

MR THOMSON TO BURNS.

I PERCEIVE the sprightly muse is now attendant upon her favourite poet, whose woodnotes wild are become as enchanting as ever. 'She says she lo'es me best of a',' is one of the pleasantest table songs I have seen, and henceforth shall be mine when the song is going round. I'll give Cunningham a copy; he can more powerfully proclaim its merit,

I am far from undervaluing your taste for the strathspey music; on the contrary, I think it highly animating and agreeable, and that some of the strathspeys, when graced with such verses as yours, will make very pleasing songs, in the same way that rough Christians are tempered and softened by lovely woman, without whom, you know, they had been brutes.

I am clear for having the 'Sow's tail,' particularly as your proposed verses to it are so extremely promising. Geordie, as you observe, is a name only fit for burlesque composition. Mrs Thomson's name (Katharine) is not at all poetical. Retain Jeanie therefore, and make the other Jamie, or any other that sounds agreeably.

Your 'Ca' the ewes' is a precious little morceau. Indeed I am perfectly astonished and charmed with the endless variety of your fancy. Here let me ask you, whether you never seriously turned your thoughts upon dramatic writing? That is a field worthy of your genius, in which it might shine forth in all its splendour. One or two successful pieces upon the London stage would make your fortune. The rage at present is for musical dramas: few or none of those which have appeared since the 'Duenna,' possess much poetical merit; there is little in the conduct of the fable, or in the dialogue, to interest the audience. They are chiefly vehicles for music and pageantry. I think you might produce a comic opera in three acts, which would live by the poetry, at the same time that it would be proper to take every assistance from her tuneful sister. Part of the songs of course would be to our favourite Scottish airs; the rest might be left to the London composer —Storace for Drury-lane, or Shield for Covent-garden: both of them very able and popular musicians. I believe that interest and manœuvring are often necessary to have a drama brought on: so it may be with the namby pamby tribe of flowery scribblers: but were you to address Mr Sheridan himself by letter, and send him a dramatic piece, I am persuaded he would, for the honour of genius, give it

a fair and candid trial. Excuse me for obtruding these hints upon your consideration.*

No. LIX.

MR THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 14th *Oct.* 1794.

THE last eight days have been devoted to the re-examination of the Scottish collections. I have read, and sung, and fiddled, and considered, till I am half blind, and wholly stupid. The few airs I have added, are inclosed.

Peter Pindar has at length sent me all the songs I expected from him, which are in general elegant and beautiful. Have you heard of a London collection of Scottish airs and songs, just published by Mr Ritson, an Englishman? I shall send you a copy. His introductory essay on the subject is curious, and evinces great reading and research, but does not decide the question as to the origin of our melodies; though he shows clearly that Mr Tytler, in his ingenious dissertation, has adduced no sort of proof of the hypothesis he wished to establish; and that his classification of the airs according to the æras when they were composed, is mere fancy and conjecture. On John Pinkerton, Esq. he has no mercy; but consigns him to damnation! He snarls at my publication, on the score of Pindar being engaged to write songs for it; uncandidly and unjustly leaving it to be inferred, that the songs of Scottish writers had been sent a-packing to make room for Peter's! Of you he speaks with some respect, but gives you a passing hit or two, for daring to dress up a little, some old foolish songs for the Museum. His sets of the Scottish airs are taken, he says, from the oldest collections and best

* Our bard had before received the same advice, and certainly took it so far into consideration, as to have cast about for a subject.—*Currie.*

authorities: many of them, however, have such a strange aspect, and are so unlike the sets which are sung by every person of taste, old or young, in town or country, that we can scarcely recognise the features of our favourites. By going to the oldest collections of our music, it does not follow that we find the melodies in their original state. These melodies had been preserved, we know not how long, by oral communication, before being collected and printed; and as different persons sing the same air very differently, according to their accurate or confused recollection of it, so even supposing the first collectors to have possessed the industry, the taste and discernment to choose the best they could hear, (which is far from certain,) still it must evidently be a chance, whether the collections exhibit any of the melodies in the state they were first composed. In selecting the melodies for my own collection, I have been as much guided by the living as by the dead. Where these differed, I preferred the sets that appeared to me the most simple and beautiful, and the most generally approved: and without meaning any compliment to my own capability of choosing, or speaking of the pains I have taken, I flatter myself that my sets will be found equally freed from vulgar errors on the one hand, and affected graces on the other.

No. LX.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

19*th October* 1794.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

BY this morning's post I have your list, and, in general, I highly approve of it. I shall, at more leisure, give you a critique on the whole. Clarke goes to your town by to-day's fly, and I wish you would call on him and take his opinion in general: you know his taste is a standard. He will return here again in a week or two: so, please do not

miss asking for him. One thing I hope he will do—persuade you to adopt my favourite, 'Craigie-burn Wood,' in your selection: it is as great a favourite of his as of mine. The lady on whom it was made is one of the finest women in Scotland; and in fact (*entre nous*) is in a manner to me what Sterne's Eliza was to him—a mistress, or friend, or what you will, in the guileless simplicity of Platonic love. (Now don't put any of your squinting constructions on this, or have any clishmaclaiver about it among our acquaintances.) I assure you that to my lovely friend you are indebted for many of your best songs of mine. Do you think that the sober, gin-horse routine of existence, could inspire a man with life, and love, and joy—could fire him with enthusiasm, or melt him with pathos, equal to the genius of your book? No! no!—Whenever I want to be more than ordinary in song; to be in some degree equal to your diviner airs; do you imagine I fast and pray for the celestial emanation? *Tout au contraire!* I have a glorious recipe; the very one that for his own use was invented by the divinity of healing and poetry, when erst he piped to the flocks of Admetus. I put myself in a regimen of admiring a fine woman; and in proportion to the adorability of her charms, in proportion you are delighted with my verses. The lightning of her eye is the godhead of Parnassus, and the witchery of her smile the divinity of Helicon!

To descend to business; if you like my idea of, 'When she cam ben she bobbit,' the following stanza of mine, altered a little from what they were formerly when set to another air, may perhaps do instead of worse stanzas:—

SAW YE MY PHELY.

(Quasi dicat Phillis.)

Tune—"When she cam ben she bobbit."

O saw ye my dear, my Phely?
O saw ye my dear, my Phely?

She's down i' the grove, she's wi' a new love,
She winna come hame to her Willy.

What says she, my dearest, my Phely?
What says she, my dearest, my Phely?
She lets thee to wit that she has thee forgot,
And for ever disowns thee her Willy.

O had I ne'er seen thee, my Phely!
O had I ne'er seen thee, my Phely!
As light as the air, and fause as thou's fair,
Thou's broken the heart o' thy Willy.

Now for a few miscellaneous remarks. 'The Posie' (in the Museum) is my composition; the air was taken down from Mrs Burns's voice.* It is well known in the West country, but the old words are trash. By the bye, take a look at the tune again, and tell me if you do not think it is the original from which 'Roslin Castle' is composed. The second part, in particular, for the first two or three bars, is exactly the old air. 'Strathallan's Lament' is mine; the music is by our right trusty and deservedly well-beloved Allan Masterton. 'Donocht-Head' is not mine; I would give ten pounds it were. It appeared first in the Edinburgh Herald; and came to the editor of that paper with the Newcastle post-mark on it.† 'Whistle o'er the lave o't' is

* 'The Posie' will be found afterwards. This, and the other poems of which he speaks, had appeared in Johnson's Museum, and Mr. T. had inquired whether they were our bard's.—*Currie.*

† The reader will be curious to see this poem, so highly prais ed by Burns. Here it is:—

"Keen blaws the wind o'er Donocht-Head,*
The snaw drives snelly thro' the dale,
The Gaberlunzie tirls my sneck,
And shivering tells his waefu' tale.

* A mountain in the North.

mine: the music said to be by a John Bruce, a celebrated violin player in Dumfries, about the beginning of this century. This I know, Bruce, who was an honest man, though a red-wud Highlandman, constantly claimed it; and by all the old musical people here, is believed to be the author of it.

'Andrew and his cutty gun.' The song to which this is set in the Museum is mine, and was composed on Miss Euphemia Murray, of Lintrose, commonly and deservedly called the flower of Strathmore.

Cauld is the night, O let me in,
And dinna let your minstrel fa',
And dinna let his winding sheet
Be naething but a wreath o' snaw.

"Full ninety winters hae I seen,
And pip'd where gor-cocks whirring flew,
And mony a day I've danc'd, I ween,
To lilts which from my drone I blew.
My Eppie wak'd, and soon she cry'd,
Get up guidman, and let him in;
For weel ye ken the winter night
Was short when he began his din.

"My Eppie's voice, O wow it's sweet,
Even tho' she bans and scaulds a wee;
But when it's tun'd to sorrow's tale,
O, haith, its doubly dear to me!
Come in, auld carl, I'll steer my fire,
I'll make it bleeze a bonnie flame;
Your bluid is thin, ye've tint the gate,
Ye should nae stray sae far frae hame.

"Nae hame have I, the minstrel said,
Sad party-strife o'erturned my ha';
And, weeping at the eve of life,
I wander thro' a wreath o' snaw."

This affecting poem is apparently incomplete. The author need not be ashamed to own himself. It is worthy of Burns, or of Macneill.—*Currie.*

It was written, we believe, by a gentleman of Newcastle, named Pickering, now deceased.—M.

'How long and dreary is the night!' I met with some such words in a collection of songs somewhere, which I altered and enlarged; and to please you, and to suit your favourite air, I have taken a stride or two across my room and have arranged it anew, as you will find on the other page.

Tune—"Cauld Kail in Aberdeen."

How long and dreary is the night,
When I am frae my dearie!
I restless lie frae e'en to morn,
Tho' I were ne'er sae weary.
For oh, her lanely nights are lang;
And oh, her dreams are eerie;
And oh, her widow'd heart is sair,
That's absent frae her dearie.

When I think on the lightsome days
I spent wi' thee, my dearie;
And now what seas between us roar,
How can I be but eerie?
For oh, &c.

How slow ye move, ye heavy hours;
The joyless day how dreary!
It was nae sae ye glinted by,
When I was wi' my dearie.
For oh, her lanely nights are lang;
And oh, her dreams are eerie;
And oh, her widow'd heart is sair,
That's absent frae her dearie.

Tell me how you like this. I differ from your idea of the expression of the tune. There is, to me, a great deal of tenderness in it. You cannot, in my opinion, dispense with a bass to your addenda airs. A lady of my acquaintance, a noted performer, plays and sings at the same time

so charmingly, that I shall never bear to see any of her songs sent into the world, as naked as Mr What-d'ye-call-um has done in his London collection.*

These English songs gravel me to death. I have not that command of the language that I have of my native tongue. I have been at 'Duncan Gray,' to dress it in English, but all I can do is deplorably stupid. For instance :—

LET NOT WOMAN E'ER COMPLAIN.

Tune—"Duncan Gray."

Let not woman e'er complain
  Of inconstancy in love ;
Let not woman e'er complain
  Fickle man is apt to rove :
Look abroad through nature's range,
Nature's mighty law is change ;
Ladies, would it not be strange,
  Man should then a monster prove ?

Mark the winds, and mark the skies ;
  Ocean's ebb, and ocean's flow :
Sun and moon but set to rise,
  Round and round the seasons go.
Why then ask of silly man,
To oppose great nature's plan ?
We'll be constant while we can—
  You can be no more, you know.

Since the above I have been out in the country taking a dinner with a friend, where I met with the lady whom I mentioned in the second page in this odds-and-ends of a letter. As usual I got into song ; and returning home I composed the following :—

* Mr Ritson.

THE LOVER'S MORNING SALUTE TO HIS MISTRESS.

Tune—"Deil tak the Wars."

Sleep'st thou, or wak'st thou, fairest creature;
Rosy morn now lifts his eye,
Numbering ilka bud which nature
Waters wi' the tears o' joy:
Now thro' the leafy woods,
And by the reeking floods,
Wild nature's tenants, freely, gladly stray;
The lintwhite in his bower
Chants o'er the breathing flower;
The lav'rock to the sky
Ascends wi' sangs o' joy,
While the sun and thou arise to bless the day.*

Phœbus gilding the brow o' morning,
Banishes ilk darksome shade,
Nature gladdening and adorning;
Such to me my lovely maid.
When absent frae my fair,
The murky shades o' care
With starless gloom o'ercast my sullen sky;
But when in beauty's light,
She meets my ravish'd sight,

* Variation:—

Now to the streaming fountain,
Or up the heathy mountain,
The hart, hind, and roe, freely, wildly-wanton stray;
In twining hazel bowers
His lay the linnet pours;
The lav'rock to the sky,
Ascends wi' sangs o' joy,
While the sun and thou arise to bless the day.

Currie.

When through my very heart
Her beaming glories dart;
'Tis then I wake to life, to light, and joy.*

If you honour my verses by setting the air to them, I will vamp up the old song, and make it English enough to be understood.

I inclose you a musical curiosity, an East Indian air, which you would swear was a Scottish one. I know the authenticity of it, as the gentleman who brought it over is a particular acquaintance of mine. Do preserve me the copy I send you, as it is the only one I have. Clarke has set a bass to it, and I intend putting it into the Musical Museum. Here follow the verses I intend for it:—

THE AULD MAN.

But lately seen in gladsome green
The woods rejoice the day,
Thro' gentle showers the laughing flowers
In double pride were gay:
But now our joys are fled,
On winter blasts awa!
Yet maiden May, in rich array,
Again shall bring them a'.

But my white pow, nae kindly thowe
Shall melt the snaws of age;
My trunk of eild, but buss or bield,
Sinks in time's wintry rage.

* Variation:—

When frae my Chloris parted,
Sad, cheerless, broken hearted,
The night's gloomy shades, cloudy, dark, o'ercast my sky.
But when she charms my sight,
In pride of beauty's light;
When thro' my very heart
Her beaming glories dart;
'Tis then, 'tis then I wake to life and joy. *Currie.*

Oh, age has weary days,
And nights o' sleepless pain!
Thou golden time o' youthfu' prime,
Why com'st thou not again!

I would be obliged to you if you would procure me a sight of Ritson's collection of English songs, which you mention in your letter. I will thank you for another information, and that as speedily as you please: whether this miserable drawling hotchpotch epistle has not completely tired you of my correspondence?

No. LXI.

MR THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 27*th October*, 1794.

I AM sensible, my dear friend, that a genuine poet can no more exist without his mistress than his meat. I wish I knew the adorable she, whose bright eyes and witching smiles have so often enraptured the Scottish bard! that I might drink her sweet health when the toast is going round. 'Craigie-burn Wood' must certainly be adopted into my family, since she is the object of the song; but, in the name of decency, I must beg a new chorus verse from you. 'O to be lying beyond thee, dearie,' is perhaps a consummation to be wished, but will not do for singing in the company of ladies. The songs in your last will do you lasting credit, and suit the respective airs charmingly. I am perfectly of your opinion with respect to the additional airs. The idea of sending them into the world naked as they were born was ungenerous. They must all be clothed and made decent by our friend Clarke.

I find I am anticipated by the friendly Cunningham in sending you Ritson's Scottish collection. Permit me, therefore, to present you with his English collection,

which you will receive by the coach. I do not find his historical essay on Scottish song interesting. Your anecdotes and miscellaneous remarks will, I am sure, be much more so. Allan has just sketched a charming design from 'Maggie Lauder.' She is dancing with such spirit as to electrify the piper, who seems almost dancing too, while he is playing with the most exquisite glee. I am much inclined to get a small copy, and to have it engraved in the style of Ritson's prints.

P. S.—Pray what do your anecdotes say concerning 'Maggie Lauder?' was she a real personage, and of what rank? You would surely "spier for her, if you ca'd at Anstruther town."

No. LXII.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

November, 1794.

MANY thanks to you, my dear Sir, for your present; it is a book of the utmost importance to me. I have yesterday begun my anecdotes, &c. for your work. I intend drawing it up in the form of a letter to you, which will save me from the tedious dull business of systematic arrangement. Indeed, as all I have to say consists of unconnected remarks, anecdotes, scraps of old songs, &c., it would be impossible to give the work a beginning, a middle, and an end, which the critics insist to be absolutely necessary in a work.* In my last, I told you my objections to the song you had selected for 'My lodging is on the cold ground.' On my visit the other day to my fair Chloris, (that is the poetic name of the lovely goddess of my inspiration,) she

* It does not appear whether Burns completed these anecdotes, &c. Something of the kind (probably the rude draughts) was found amongst his papers, and appears elsewhere.—*Currie.*

suggested an idea, which I, in my return from the visit, wrought into the following song :—

CHLORIS.

My Chloris, mark how green the groves,
The primrose banks how fair ;
The balmy gales awake the flowers,
And wave thy flaxen hair.

The lav'rock shuns the palace gay,
And o'er the cottage sings :
For nature smiles as sweet, I ween,
To shepherds as to kings.

Let minstrels sweep the skilfu' string
In lordly lighted ha' :
The shepherd stops his simple reed,
Blithe, in the birken shaw.

The princely revel may survey
Our rustic dance wi' scorn ;
But are their hearts as light as ours
Beneath the milk-white thorn ?

The shepherd, in the flowery glen,
In shepherd's phrase will woo :
The courtier tells a finer tale,
But is his heart as true ?

These wild-wood flowers I've pu'd, to deck
That spotless breast o' thine ;
The courtier's gems may witness love—
But 'tis na love like mine.

How do you like the simplicity and tenderness of this pastoral ? I think it pretty well.

I like you for entering so candidly and so kindly into the story of "*ma chere Amie.*" I assure you I was never

more in earnest in my life, than in the account of that affair which I sent you in my last.—Conjugal love is a passion which I deeply feel, and highly venerate; but, somehow, it does not make such a figure in poesy as that other species of the passion,

"Where Love is liberty, and Nature law.

Musically speaking, the first is an instrument of which the gamut is scanty and confined, but the tones inexpressibly sweet; while the last has powers equal to all the intellectual modulations of the human soul. Still, I am a very poet in my enthusiasm of the passion. The welfare and happiness of the beloved object is the first and inviolate sentiment that pervades my soul; and whatever pleasures I might wish for, or whatever might be the raptures they would give me, yet, if they interfere with that first principle, it is having these pleasures at a dishonest price; and justice forbids, and generosity disdains, the purchase!

Despairing of my own powers to give you variety enough in English songs, I have been turning over old collections, to pick out songs, of which the measure is something similar to what I want; and, with a little alteration, so as to suit the rhythm of the air exactly, to give you them for your work. Where the songs have hitherto been but little noticed, nor have ever been set to music, I think the shift a fair one. A song, which, under the same first verse, you will find in Ramsay's Tea-table Miscellany, I have cut down for an English dress to your 'Dainty Davie,' as follows:—

IT WAS THE CHARMING MONTH OF MAY.

ALTERED FROM AN OLD ENGLISH ONE.

It was the charming month of May,
When all the flow'rs were fresh and gay,
One morning, by the break of day,
The youthful, charming Chloe;

From peaceful slumber she arose,
Girt on her mantle and her hose,
And o'er the flow'ry mead she goes,
The youthful, charming Chloe.
Lovely was she by the dawn,
Youthful Chloe, charming Chloe,
Tripping o'er the pearly lawn,
The youthful, charming Chloe.

The feather'd people, you might see
Perch'd all around on every tree,
In notes of sweetest melody,
They hail the charming Chloe;
Till, painting gay the eastern skies,
The glorious sun began to rise,
Out-rivall'd by the radiant eyes
Of youthful, charming Chloe.
Lovely was she by the dawn,
Youthful Chloe, charming Chloe,
Tripping o'er the pearly lawn,
The youthful, charming Chloe.

You may think meanly of this, but take a look at the bombast original, and you will be surprised that I have made so much of it. I have finished my song to 'Rothemurche's Rant;' and you have Clarke to consult as to the set of the air for singing.

LASSIE WI' THE LINT-WHITE LOCKS.

Tune—"Rothemurche's Rant."

Lassie wi' the lint-white locks,
Bonnie lassie, artless lassie,
Wilt thou wi' me tent the flocks?
Wilt thou be my dearie, O?
Now nature cleeds the flowery lea,
And a' is young and sweet like thee;

O wilt thou share its joys wi' me,
And say thou'lt be my dearie, O?

And when the welcome simmer shower
Has cheer'd ilk drooping little flower,
We'll to the breathing woodbine bower
At sultry noon, my dearie, O.
Lassie wi', &c.

When Cynthia lights, wi' silver ray,
The weary shearer's hameward way;
Thro' yellow waving fields we'll stray,
And talk o' love, my dearie, O.
Lassie, wi', &c.

And when the howling wintry blast
Disturbs my lassie's midnight rest,
Enclasped to my faithful breast,
I'll comfort thee, my dearie, O.*
Lassie wi' the lint-white locks,
Bonnie lassie, artless lassie!
Wilt thou wi' me tent the flocks,
Wilt thou be my dearie, O?

This piece has at least the merit of being a regular pastoral: the vernal morn, the summer noon, the autumnal evening, and the winter night, are regularly rounded. If you like it, well: if not, I will insert it in the Museum.

* In some of the MSS. this stanza runs thus: —
And should the howling wintry blast
Disturb my lassie's midnight rest,
I'll fauld thee to my faithfu' breast,
And comfort thee, my dearie, O. *Currie.*

No. LXIII.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

I AM out of temper that you should set so sweet, so tender an air, as, 'Deil tak the wars,' to the foolish old verses. You talk of the silliness of 'Saw ye my father?' by heavens! the odds is gold to brass! Besides, the old song, though now pretty well modernized into the Scottish language, is originally, and in the early editions, a bungling low imitation of the Scottish manner, by that genius Tom D'Urfey: so has no pretensions to be a Scottish production. There is a pretty English song by Sheridan, in the 'Duenna,' to this air, which is out of sight superior to D'Urfey's. It begins,

"When sable night each drooping plant restoring."

The air, if I understand the expression of it properly, is the very native language of simplicity, tenderness, and love. I have again gone over my song to the tune as follows.*

Now for my English song to 'Nancy's to the Greenwood,' &c.

FAREWELL THOU STREAM.

Farewell thou stream that winding flows
  Around Eliza's dwelling!
O mem'ry! spare the cruel throes
  Within my bosom swelling:
Condemn'd to drag a hopeless chain,
  And yet in secret languish;
To feel a fire in ev'ry vein,
  Nor dare disclose my anguish.

* See the song in its first and best dress in page 175. Our bard remarks upon it, "I could easily throw this into an English mould; but, to my taste, in the simple and the tender of the pastoral song, a sprinkling of the old Scottish has an inimitable effect." —*Currie.*

Love's veriest wretch, unseen, unknown,
I fain my griefs would cover:
The bursting sigh, th' unweeting groan,
Betray the hapless lover.
I know thou doom'st me to despair,
Nor wilt, nor canst relieve me;
But oh! Eliza, hear one prayer,
For pity's sake forgive me!

The music of thy voice I heard,
Nor wist while it enslav'd me;
I saw thine eyes, yet nothing fear'd,
Till fears no more had sav'd me:
Th' unwary sailor thus aghast,
The wheeling torrent viewing;
'Mid circling horrors sinks at last
In overwhelming ruin.

There is an air, 'The Caledonian Hunt's delight,' to which I wrote a song that you will find in Johnson. 'Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon;' this air, I think, might find a place among your hundred, as Lear says of his knights. Do you know the history of the air? It is curious enough. A good many years ago, Mr James Miller, writer in your good town, a gentleman whom possibly you know, was in company with our friend Clarke; and talking of Scottish music, Miller expressed an ardent ambition to be able to compose a Scots air. Mr Clarke, partly by way of joke, told him to keep to the black keys of the harpsichord, and preserve some kind of rhythm; and he would infallibly compose a Scots air. Certain it is that, in a few days, Mr Miller produced the rudiments of an air, which Mr Clarke, with some touches and corrections, fashioned into the tune in question. Ritson, you know, has the same story of the black keys; but this account which I have just given you, Mr Clarke informed me of several years ago. Now to show you how difficult it is to

trace the origin of our airs, I have heard it repeatedly asserted that this was an Irish air; nay, I met with an Irish gentleman who affirmed he had heard it in Ireland among the old women; while, on the other hand, a countess informed me, that the first person who introduced the air into this country, was a baronet's lady of her acquaintance, who took down the notes from an itinerant piper in the Isle of Man. How difficult then to ascertain the truth respecting our poesy and music! I, myself, have lately seen a couple of ballads sung through the streets of Dumfries, with my name at the head of them as the author, though it was the first time I had ever seen them.

I thank you for admitting 'Craigie-burn Wood;' and I shall take care to furnish you with a new chorus. In fact, the chorus was not my work, but a part of some old verses to the air. If I can catch myself in a more than ordinarily propitious moment, I shall write a new 'Craigie-burn Wood' altogether. My heart is much in the theme.

I am ashamed, my dear fellow, to make the request; 'tis dunning your generosity; but in a moment, when I had forgotten whether I was rich or poor, I promised Chloris a copy of your songs. It wrings my honest pride to write you this: but an ungracious request is doubly so by a tedious apology. To make you some amends, as soon as I have extracted the necessary information out of them, I will return you Ritson's volumes.

The lady is not a little proud that she is to make so distinguished a figure in your collection, and I am not a little proud that I have it in my power to please her so much. Lucky it is for your patience that my paper is done, for when I am in a scribbling humour, I know not when to give over.

No. LXIV.

MR THOMSON TO BURNS.

15th November, 1794.

My good Sir,

Since receiving your last, I have had another interview with Mr Clarke, and a long consultation. He thinks the 'Caledonian Hunt' is more Bacchanalian than amorous in its nature, and recommends it to you to match the air accordingly. Pray, did it ever occur to you how peculiarly well the Scottish airs are adapted for verses in the form of a dialogue? The first part of the air is generally low, and suited for a man's voice; and the second part in many instances cannot be sung, at concert pitch, but by a female voice. A song thus performed makes an agreeable variety, but few of ours are written in this form: I wish you would think of it in some of those that remain. The only one of the kind you have sent me is admirable, and will be a universal favourite.

Your verses for 'Rothemurche' are so sweetly pastoral, and your serenade to Chloris, for 'Deil tak the wars,' so passionately tender, that I have sung myself into raptures with them. Your song for 'My lodging is on the cold ground,' is likewise a diamond of the first water; I am quite dazzled and delighted by it. Some of your Chlorises I suppose have flaxen hair, from your partiality for this colour; else we differ about it; for I should scarcely conceive a woman to be a beauty, on reading that she had lint-white locks!

'Farewell thou stream that winding flows,' I think excellent, but it is much too serious to come after 'Nancy:' at least it would seem an incongruity to provide the same air with merry Scottish and melancholy English verses! The more that the two sets of verses resemble each other, in their general character, the better. Those you have

manufactured for 'Dainty Davie' will answer charmingly. I am happy to find you have begun your anecdotes: I care not how long they be, for it is impossible that any thing from your pen can be tedious. Let me beseech you not to use ceremony in telling me when you wish to present any of your friends with the songs: the next carrier will bring you three copies, and you are as welcome to twenty as to a pinch of snuff.

No. LXV.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

19th November, 1794.

You see, my dear Sir, what a punctual correspondent I am; though indeed you may thank yourself for the *tedium* of my letters, as you have so flattered me on my horsemanship with my favourite hobby, and have praised the grace of his ambling so much, that I am scarcely ever off his back. For instance, this morning, though a keen blowing frost, in my walk before breakfast, I finished my duet, which you were pleased to praise so much. Whether I have uniformly succeeded, I will not say; but here it is for you, though it is not an hour old.

O PHILLY, HAPPY BE THAT DAY.

Tune—"The Sow's tail."

HE.

O Philly, happy be that day
When roving through the gather'd hay,
My youthfu' heart was stown away,
And by thy charms, my Philly.

SHE.

O Willy, aye I bless the grove
Where first I own'd my maiden love,

Whilst thou didst pledge the Powers above
To be my ain dear Willy.

HE.

As songsters of the early year
Are ilka day mair sweet to hear,
So ilka day to me mair dear
And charming is my Philly.

SHE.

As on the brier the budding rose
Still richer breathes and fairer blows,
So in my tender bosom grows
The love I bear my Willy.

HE.

The milder sun and bluer sky,
That crown my harvest cares wi' joy,
Were ne'er sae welcome to my eye
As is a sight o' Philly.

SHE.

The little swallow's wanton wing,
Tho' wafting o'er the flowery spring,
Did ne'er to me sic tidings bring,
As meeting o' my Willy.

HE.

The bee that thro' the sunny hour
Sips nectar in the opening flower
Compar'd wi' my delight is poor,
Upon the lips o' Philly.

SHE.

The woodbine in the dewy weet
When evening shades in silence meet,
Is nocht sae fragrant or sae sweet
As is a kiss o' Willy.

HE.

Let fortune's wheel at random rin,
And fools may tyne, and knaves may win;
My thoughts are a' bound up in ane,
And that's my ain dear Philly.

SHE.

What's a' the joys that gowd can gie!
I care nae wealth a single flie;
The lad I love's the lad for me,
And that's my ain dear Willy.

Tell me honestly how you like it; and point out whatever you think faulty.

I am much pleased with your idea of singing our songs in alternate stanzas, and regret that you did not hint it to me sooner. In those that remain, I shall have it in my eye. I remember your objections to the name Philly; but it is the common abbreviation of Phillis. Sally, the only other name that suits, has to my ear a vulgarity about it, which unfits it for any thing except burlesque. The legion of Scottish poetasters of the day, whom your brother editor, Mr Ritson, ranks with me, as my coevals, have always mistaken vulgarity for simplicity: whereas, simplicity is as much *eloignée* from vulgarity, on the one hand, as from affected point and puerile conceit on the other.

I agree with you as to the air, 'Craigie-burn Wood,' that a chorus would in some degree spoil the effect; and shall certainly have none in my projected song to it. It is not however a case in point with 'Rothemurche;' there, as in 'Roy's Wife of Aldivalloch,' a chorus goes to my taste, well enough. As to the chorus going first, that is the case with 'Roy's Wife,' as well as 'Rothemurche.' In fact, in the first part of both tunes, the rhythm is so peculiar and irregular, and on that irregularity depends so much of their beauty, that we must e'en take them with all their wildness, and humour the verse accordingly. Leaving out the start-

ing note, in both tunes, has, I think, an effect that no regularity could counterbalance the want of.

Try, { *O Roy's* Wife of Aldivalloch. / *O Lassie* wi' the lint-white locks.
and
compare with, { *Roy's* Wife of Aldivalloch. / *Lassie* wi' the lint-white locks.

Does not the tameness of the prefixed syllable strike you? In the last case, with the true furor of genius, you strike at once into the wild originality of the air; whereas, in the first insipid method, it is like the grating screw of the pins before the fiddle is brought into tune. This is my taste; if I am wrong, I beg pardon of the *cognoscenti*.

'The Caledonian Hunt' is so charming, that it would make any subject in a song go down; but pathos is certainly its native tongue. Scottish Bacchanalians we certainly want, though the few we have are excellent. For instance, 'Todlin hame,' is, for wit and humour, an unparalleled composition; and 'Andrew and his cutty Gun,' is the work of a master. By the way, are you not quite vexed to think that those men of genius, for such they certainly were, who composed our fine Scottish lyrics, should be unknown? It has given me many a heart-ache. Apropos to Bacchanalian songs in Scottish; I composed one yesterday, for an air I like much—'Lumps o' pudding.'

CONTENTED WI' LITTLE.

Contented wi' little, and cantie wi' mair,
Whene'er I forgather wi' sorrow and care,
I gie them a skelp, as they're creepin alang,
Wi' a cog o' guid swats, and an auld Scottish sang.

I whyles claw the elbow o' troublesome thought;
But man is a sodger, and life is a faught:
My mirth and guid humour are coin in my pouch,
And my freedom's my lairdship nae monarch dare touch.

A towmond o' trouble, should that be my fa',
A night o' guid fellowship sowthers it a':
When at the blithe end o' our journey at last,
Wha the deil ever thinks o' the road he has past?

Blind chance, let her snapper and stoyte on her way;
Be't to me, be't frae me, e'en let the jade gae:
Come ease, or come travail; come pleasure or pain,
My warst word is—"Welcome, and welcome again!"

If you do not relish this air, I will send it to Johnson.

No. LXVI.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

SINCE yesterday's penmanship, I have framed a couple of English stanzas, by way of an English song to 'Roy's Wife.' You will allow me, that in this instance, my English corresponds in sentiment with the Scottish.

CANST THOU LEAVE ME THUS, MY KATY?

Tune—"Roy's Wife."

Canst thou leave me thus, my Katy?
Canst thou leave me thus, my Katy?
Well thou know'st my aching heart—
And canst thou leave me thus for pity?
Is this thy plighted, fond regard,
Thus cruelly to part, my Katy?
Is this thy faithful swain's reward—
An aching, broken heart, my Katy?

Farewell! and ne'er such sorrows tear
That fickle heart of thine, my Katy!
Thou may'st find those will love thee dear—
But not a love like mine, my Katy.

Canst thou leave me thus, my Katy?
Canst thou leave me thus, my Katy?
Well thou know'st my aching heart—
And canst thou leave me thus for pity? *

* To this address, in the character of a forsaken lover, a reply was found, on the part of the lady, among the MSS. of our bard, evidently in a female hand-writing. The temptation to give it to the public is irresistible; and if, in so doing, offence should be given to the fair authoress, the beauty of her verses must plead our excuse:—

Tune—"Roy's Wife."

Stay my Willie—yet believe me,
Stay my Willie—yet believe me,
For, ah! thou know'st na every pang
Wad wring my bosom shouldst thou leave me.
Tell me that thou yet art true,
And a' my wrongs shall be forgiven,
And when this heart proves fause to thee,
Yon sun shall cease its course in heaven.

But to think I was betrayed,
That falsehood e'er our loves should sunder!
To take the flow'ret to my breast,
And find the gullefu' serpent under.
Stay my Willie, &c.

Could I hope thou 'dst ne'er deceive,
Celestial pleasures might I choose 'em,
I'd slight, nor seek in other spheres
That heaven I'd find within thy bosom.
Stay my Willie—yet believe me,
Stay my Willie—yet believe me,
For, ah! thou know'st na every pang
Wad wring my bosom shouldst thou leave me.

It may amuse the reader to be told, that on this occasion the gentleman and the lady have exchanged the dialects of their respective countries. The Scottish bard makes his address in pure English: the reply on the part of the lady, in the Scottish dialect, is, if we mistake not, by a young and beautiful Englishwoman.—*Currie.*

The accomplished lady who wrote the reply was Mrs Riddell. She and the poet had quarrelled upon some matter of punctilio,

Well! I think this, to be done in two or three turns across my room, and with two or three pinches of Irish Blackguard, is not so far amiss. You see I am determined to have my quantum of applause from somebody.

Tell my friend Allan (for I am sure that we only want the trifling circumstance of being known to one another, to be the best friends on earth,) that I much suspect he has, in his plates, mistaken the figure of the stock and horn. I have, at last, gotten one; but it is a very rude instrument. It is composed of three parts; the stock, which is the hinder thigh-bone of a sheep, such as you see in a mutton ham; the horn, which is a common Highland cow's horn, cut off at the smaller end, until the aperture be large enough to admit the stock to be pushed up through the horn, until it be held by the thicker end of the thigh-bone; and lastly, an oaten reed exactly cut and notched like that which you see every shepherd-boy have, when the corn-stems are green and full-grown. The reed is not made fast in the bone, but is held by the lips, and plays loose in the smaller end of the stock; while the stock with the horn hanging on its larger end, is held by the hands in playing. The stock has six or seven ventiges on the upper side, and one back-ventige, like the common flute. This of mine was made by a man from the braes of Athole, and is exactly what the shepherds wont to use in that country.

However, either it is not quite properly bored in the holes, or else we have not the art of blowing it rightly; for we can make little of it. If Mr Allan chooses, I will send him a sight of mine; as I look on myself to be a kind of brother-brush with him. "Pride in poets is nae sin;" and I will say it, that I look on Mr Allan and Mr Burns to be the only genuine and real painters of Scottish costume in the world.*

and his offence she punished by maintaining a coldness towards him for upwards of two years.—M.

* This is an interesting and minute account of an ancient instrument of music, well known to the peasantry of Scotland. In

No. LXVII.

MR THOMSON TO BURNS.

28th November, 1794.

I ACKNOWLEDGE, my dear Sir, you are not only the most punctual, but the most delectable correspondent I ever met

the Complaynt of Scotland, written in 1548, the author draws this graphic picture of the manners of our pastoral ancestors. "I rais and returnit to the fresche fieldis that I cam fra, quhar I beheld mony hudit hirdis blawand ther buc hornis and ther corne pipis, calland and convoyand mony fat floc to be fed on the fieldis. Than the scheiphirdis pat ther scheip on bankis and brais and on dry hillis, to get ther pastour. Than I beheld the scheiphirdis wyvis and ther childer that brocht there morning bracfast to the scheiphirdis. Than the scheiphirdis wyvis cuttit raschis and seggis and gadrit mony fragrant grene meduart, with the quhilkis tha covurit the end of a leye rig, and syne sat doune altogyddir to tak there refectione, quhar thai maid grit cheir of evyrie sort of mylk, baitht of ky mylk, and zoue mylk, sueit mylk, and sour mylk, curdis and quhaye, sourkittis, fresche buttir, and salt buttir, reyme, flot quhaye, grene cheis, kyrn mylk. Evyrie scheiphird hed an horne spune in the lug of there bonet: thai had na breyd but ry caikis and fustean skonnis maid of flour. Than eftir there disjune, thai began to talk of grit myrrynes that was rycht plesand to be hard."

The things "rycht plesand to be hard," consisted of "gudé tailis and fabillis," and "sueit melodious sangis of natural music of the antiquete," after enumerating which our author goes on to tell the different musical instruments wherewith the shepherds enlivened the dance. "Than eftir this sueit celest armonye, thai began to dance in ane ring; evyrie ald scheiphird led his wyfe be the hand, and evyrie zong scheiphird led hyr quhome he luffit best. There was viij scheiphirdis, and ilk ane of them hed ane syndry instrument to play to the laif. The first hed ane drone bag pipe, the nyxt hed ane pipe maid of ane bleddir and of ane reid, the thrid playit on ane trump, the feyrd on ane corne pipe, the fyft playit on ane pipe maid of ane gait horne, the sext playit on aue recordar, the sevint plait on ane fiddil, and the last plait on ane quhissil."

The late Dr Leyden, who edited the curious work from which the above extracts are given, has enriched his edition with a learned and valuable dissertation, from which we take the follow-

with. To attempt flattering you never entered my head; the truth is, I look back with surprise at my impudence, in

ing passages, as illustrative of the subject in question, for he has exhausted all which can be said about it.

"The 'pipe maid of ane gait horne,' is the stock and horn, or 'buck horne' of the Scottish peasantry, formed by inserting a reed, or pipe into a horn, which gives a full and mellow expression to the sound. The reed or whistle was often formed of the excavated elder branch, to which practice there is an allusion in Cockelby's Sow, where 'the pype maid of a borit bourtre,' is mentioned as the appropriate musical instrument of the 'nolt hirdis.' The 'stoc-horn' mentioned in the same poem, is merely a species of bugle, or open cow's horn, used for giving an alarm, like the Irish stuic or stoc, a brazen tube formed like the horn of a cow, and employed as a speaking trumpet. The pib-corn, used in some districts of Wales, seems to be only an improved species of the stock and horn, from which it differs, in having both extremities of the pipe or whistle inserted in a horn. The Welch, according to Higden, employed these 'hornes of gheet,' as he terms them, at their funerals. The stock and horn may likewise be considered as synonymous with the 'chalemaulx de Cornouaille' in the Romaunt of the Rose, rendered by Chaucer, 'hornpipes of Cornewaile.' In Merciai's 'Les Vigiles de la mort du Roi Charles Septiesme,' the Horn pipe is likewise mentioned as a favourite pastoral instrument.

"Viuent pastoureaulx,
Brebiz & aigneaulx,
Moutons a troppeaux,
Bergiers pastourelles.
A tout leurs gasteaulx,
Farciz de beaulx aulx,
Pastez de naueaulx
Au lart et groiselles.
Cornes challumelles,
Dansses sauterelles,
Filles et pucelles,
Prenez voz chappeaulx.
De roses vermeilles,
Et ses beaulx rainceaulx.
Tous plains de prunelles,
Faictes tournebouelles,
Sur prez & sur treilles,
Au chant des oyseaulx."

From the following passage of the Roman de la Rose, the chalemaulx and chalemelle appear not to have been exactly the same instruments.

so frequently nibbling at lines and couplets of your incomparable lyrics, for which, perhaps, if you had served me

---

"Puis met in cymbales sa cure,
Puis prent freteaulx, et si fretele,
Et chalemaulx, et chalemelle,
Et puis taboure, et flute, et tymbre,
Et citole, et trompe, et cheurie,
Et si psalterionne et viele,
D'une joliete viele;
Puis prent sa muse et se travaille
Aux instrumens de Cornouaille,
Et espringue et sautele et bale."

There can be no doubt but this instrument is the 'liltyng horn' of Chaucer, such

"As haue these little heerde gromes,
That kepen beastes in the bromes."

The stock and horn was so formed, that the parts could be easily separated, while the horn might be employed as a bugle, and the pipe, as a simple pipe or whistle. The stock horn, in the strict sense, is the cornet, or crumhorn of the Germans, the shalmey, or chalumeau, used with the trumpet at tilts and tournaments. Thus,

"Trumpettis and schalmis with a schout
Played or the rink began."

The shalmele is enumerated by Gower among the instruments of music in the court of Venus.

"In suche accorde and such a sowne
Of bumbarde and of clariowne,
With cornemuse and shalmele,
That it was halfe a mannes hele
So glad a noyse for to here.—"

It is curious that the pipe is excluded from 'the companie of Elde,' in the court of Venus.

"But yet I herde no pipes there
To make mirthe in mannes ere;
But the musike I might knowe
For olde men which sowned lowe,
With harpe and lute and the citole;
The houe dance and the carole,
In such a wise as loue hath bede,
A softe paas thei daunce and trede." M.

right, you would have sent me to the devil. On the contrary, however, you have all along condescended to invite my criticism with so much courtesy, that it ceases to be wonderful, if I have sometimes given myself the airs of a reviewer. Your last budget demands unqualified praise: all the songs are charming, but the duet is a *chef d'œuvre.* 'Lumps o' pudding' shall certainly make one of my family dishes; you have cooked it so capitally, that it will please all palates. Do give us a few more of this cast when you find yourself in good spirits; these convivial songs are more wanted than those of the amorous kind, of which we have great choice. Besides, one does not often meet with a singer capable of giving the proper effect to the latter, while the former are easily sung, and acceptable to every body. I participate in your regret that the authors of some of our best songs are unknown: it is provoking to every admirer of genius.

I mean to have a picture painted from your beautiful ballad, '.The Soldier's Return,' to be engraved for one of my frontispieces. The most interesting point of time appears to me, when she first recognises her ain dear Willie, "She gaz'd, she redden'd like a rose." The three lines immediately following are no doubt more impressive on the reader's feelings; but were the painter to fix on these, then you'll observe the animation and anxiety of her countenance is gone, and he could only represent her fainting in the soldier's arms. But I submit the matter to you, and beg your opinion.

Allan desires me to thank you for your accurate description of the stock and horn, and for the very gratifying compliment you pay him in considering him worthy of standing in a niche by the side of Burns in the Scottish Pantheon. He has seen the rude instrument you describe, so does not want you to send it; but wishes to know whether you believe it to have ever been generally used as a musical pipe by the Scottish shepherds, and when, and in what part of the country chiefly. I doubt much if it was capa-

ble of any thing but routing and roaring. A friend of mine says he remembers to have heard one in his younger days, made of wood instead of your bone, and that the sound was abominable.*

Do not, I beseech you, return any books.

No. LXVIII.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

December, 1794.

It is, I assure you, the pride of my heart, to do any thing to forward, or add to the value of your book; and as I agree with you that the Jacobite song in the Museum, to 'There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame,' would not so well consort with Peter Pindar's excellent love-song to that air, I have just framed for you the following:—

MY NANNIE'S AWA.

Tune—"There'll never be peace," &c.

Now in her green mantle blithe nature arrays,
And listens the lambkins that bleat o'er the braes,
While birds warble welcome in ilka green shaw;
But to me it's delightless—my Nannie's awa.

The snaw-drap and primrose our woodlands adorn,
And violets bathe in the weet o' the morn;
They pain my sad bosom, sae sweetly they blaw,
They mind me o' Nannie—and Nannie's awa.

* The query put by Mr Thomson, is sufficiently answered by the lengthened note, appended to No. LXVI.; the interest which every one, curious in the history of Scottish music, must attach to it, will excuse its prolixity.—M.

Thou lav'rock that springs frae the dews of the lawn,
The shepherd to warn o' the grey-breaking dawn,
And thou mellow mavis that hails the night fa',
Give over for pity—my Nannie's awa.

Come, autumn, sae pensive, in yellow and grey,
And soothe me wi' tidings o' nature's decay:
The dark, dreary winter, and wild-driving snaw,
Alane can delight me—now Nannie's awa.*

How does this please you? As to the point of time for the expression, in your proposed print from my 'Sodger's Return,' it must certainly be at—"She gaz'd." The interesting dubiety and suspense taking possession of her countenance, and the gushing fondness, with a mixture of roguish playfulness in his, strike me as things of which a master will make a great deal. In great haste, but in great truth, yours.

No. LXIX.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

January, 1795.

I FEAR for my songs; however, a few may please, yet originality is a coy feature in composition, and in a multiplicity of efforts in the same style, disappears altogether. For these three thousand years, we poetic folks have been describing the spring, for instance; and as the spring continues the same, there must soon be a sameness in the imagery, &c. of these said rhyming folks.

A great critic (Aikin) on songs says that love and wine are the exclusive themes for song-writing. The following is on neither subject, and consequently is no song; but

* The heroine of this pastoral song is supposed to be Clarinda, otherwise Mrs M'Ilhose.—M.

will be allowed, I think, to be two or three pretty good prose thoughts inverted into rhyme :—

IS THERE FOR HONEST POVERTY.

Tune—"For a' that and a' that."

Is there, for honest poverty,
That hangs his head, and a' that;
The coward-slave, we pass him by,
We dare be poor for a' that!
For a' that, and a' that,
Our toil's obscure, and a' that,
The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
The man's the gowd for a' that.

What tho' on hamely fare we dine,
Wear hoddin grey, and a' that;
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine,
A man's a man for a' that;
For a' that, and a' that,
Their tinsel show, and a' that;
The honest man, though e'er sae poor,
Is king o' men for a' that.

Ye see yon birkie, ca'd a lord,
Wha struts, and stares, and a' that;
Tho' hundreds worship at his word,
He's but a coof for a' that:
For a' that, and a' that,
His riband, star, and a' that,
The man of independent mind,
He looks and laughs at a' that.

A king can mak a belted knight,*
A marquis, duke, and a' that;

* In some editions this line runs thus :—
A *prince* can mak a belted knight.

But an honest man's aboon his might,
Guid faith he maunna fa' that!
For a' that, and a' that,
Their dignities, and a' that,
The pith o' sense, and pride o' worth,
Are higher ranks than a' that.

Then let us pray that come it may,
As come it will for a' that,
That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth,
May bear the gree, and a' that,
For a' that, and a' that,
It's coming yet for a' that,
That man to man, the warld o'er,
Shall brothers be for a' that.

I do not give you the foregoing song for your book, but merely by way of *vive la bagatelle;* for the piece is not really poetry. How will the following do for 'Craigie-burn Wood?'

CRAIGIE-BURN WOOD.*

Sweet fa's the eve on Cragie-burn,
And blithe awakes the morrow,
But a' the pride o' spring's return
Can yield me nocht but sorrow.

* This sweet little song savours much of the secret love displayed in the following old verses:—

Dinna ask me gin I luve thee?
Deed I darena tell;
Dinna ask me gin I luve thee?
Ask it o' yoursell.
When ye come to yon town end,
Fu' mony a lass ye'll see;
Dinna, dinna, look at them,
For fear ye mindna me.

O dinna look at me sae aft,
Sae weel as ye may trow;

I see the flowers and spreading trees,
I hear the wild birds singing;
But what a weary wight can please,
And care his bosom wringing?

Fain, fain would I my griefs impart,
Yet darena for your anger;
But secret love will break my heart,
If I conceal it langer.

If thou refuse to pity me,
If thou shalt love anither,
When yon green leaves fade frae the tree,
Around my grave they'll wither.*

Farewell! God bless you.

For when ye look at me sae aft,
I canna look at you.
Dinna ask me, &c.

Little ken ye but mony ane,
Will say they fancy thee;
But only keep your mind to them
That fancies nane but thee.
Dinna ask me gin I luve thee,—
Deed I darena tell;
Dinna ask me gin I luve thee,—
Ask it o' yoursell. B.

* Craigie-burn Wood is situated on the banks of the river Moffat, and about three miles distant from the village of that name, celebrated for its medicinal waters. The woods of Craigie-burn and of Dumcrief, were at one time favourite haunts of our poet. It was there he met the "Lassie wi' the lint-white locks," and that he conceived several of his beautiful lyrics.—*Currie.*

No. LXX.

MR THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 30*th Jan.* 1795.

MY DEAR SIR,

I THANK you heartily for 'Nannie's awa,' as well as for 'Craigie-burn,' which I think a very comely pair. Your observation on the difficulty of original writing in a number of efforts in the same style, strikes me very forcibly; and it has again and again excited my wonder to find you continually surmounting this difficulty in the many delightful songs you have sent me. Your *vive la bagatelle* song, For a' that,' shall undoubtedly be included in my list.

No. LXXI.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

February, 1795.

HERE is another trial at your favourite air :—

Tune—"Let me in this ae night."

O lassie, art thou sleeping yet,
Or art thou wakin, I would wit?
For love has bound me hand and foot,
And I would fain be in, jo.
O let me in this ae night,
This ae, ae, ae night;
For pity's sake this ae night,
O rise and let me in, jo!

Thou hear'st the winter wind and weet,
Nae star blinks thro' the driving sleet:

Tak pity on my weary feet,
And shield me frae the rain, jo.
O let me in, &c.

The bitter blast that round me blaws
Unheeded howls, unheeded fa's ;
The cauldness o' thy heart's the cause
Of a' my grief and pain, jo.
O let me in this ae night,
This ae, ae, ae night ;
For pity's sake this ae night,
O rise and let me in, jo !

HER ANSWER.

O tell na me o' wind and rain,
Upbraid na me wi' cauld disdain !
Gae back the gait ye cam again,
I winna let you in, jo.
I tell you now this ae night,
This ae, ae, ae night,
And ance for a' this ae night,
I winna let you in, jo !

The snellest blast, at mirkest hours,
That round the pathless wand'rer pours,
Is nocht to what poor she endures,
That's trusted faithless man, jo.
I tell you now, &c.

The sweetest flower that deck'd the mead,
Now trodden like the vilest weed ;
Let simple maid the lesson read,
The weird may be her ain, jo.
I tell you now, &c.

The bird that charm'd his summer-day,
Is now the cruel fowler's prey ;

Let witless, trusting, woman say
How aft her fate's the same, jo
I tell you now this ae night,
This ae, ae, ae night,
And ance for a' this ae night,
I winna let you in, jo!*

I do not know whether it will do.

* The greater part of this song is almost literally copied from old verses, which, under the same title, appear in Herd's collection. We subjoin part of the elder lyric:—

LET ME IN THIS AE NIGHT.

O lassie, art thou sleeping yet;
Or are you waking I would wit?
For love has bound me hand and foot,
And I would fain be in, jo.
O let me in this ae night,
This ae, ae, ae night,
O let me in this ae night,
And I'll ne'er come back again, jo.

The morn it is the term-day,
I maun away, I canna stay,
O! pity me before I gae,
And rise and let me in, jo.
O let me in, &c.

The night it is baith cauld and weet;
The morn it will be snaw and sleet,
My shoon are frozen to my feet,
Wi' standing on the plain, jo.
O let me in, &c.

I am the laird of Windy-wa's,
I come na here without a cause,
And I hae gotten mony fa's
Upon a naked wame, jo.
O let me in, &c.

My father's wa'king on the street,
My mither the chamber-keys does keep;
My chamber-door does chirp and cheep,
And I dare nae let you in, jo.

No. LXXII.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

ECCLEFECHAN, *7th Feb.* 1795.

MY DEAR THOMSON,

You cannot have any idea of the predicament in which I write to you. In the course of my duty as Supervisor, (in which capacity I have acted of late,) I came yesternight to this unfortunate, wicked, little village. I have gone forward, but snows of ten feet deep have impeded my progress; I have tried to "gae back the gait I cam again," but the same obstacle has shut me up within insuperable bars. To add to my misfortune, since dinner, a scraper has been torturing catgut, in sounds that would have insulted the dying agonies of a sow under the hands of a butcher, and thinks himself, on that very account, exceeding good company. In fact, I have been in a dilemma, either to get drunk, to forget these miseries; or to hang myself, to get rid of them; like a prudent man, (a character congenial to my every thought, word, and deed,) I, of two evils, have chosen the least, and am, very drunk at your service!*

O gae your ways this ae night,
This ae, ae, ae night,
O gae your ways this ae night,
For I dare nae let you in, jo.

But I'll come stealing saftly in,
And cannily make little din;
And then the gate to you I'll find,
If you'll but direct me in, jo.
O let me in this ae night,
This ae, ae, ae night,
O let me in this ae night,
And I'll ne'er come back again, jo. M.

* "The bard must have been tipsy indeed, to abuse sweet Ecclefechan at this rate,"—so says Dr Currie, and our ingenious

I wrote to you yesterday from Dumfries. I had not time then to tell you all I wanted to say; and, Heaven knows, at present I have not capacity.

Do you know an air—I am sure you must know it—'We'll gang nae mair to yon town?' I think, in slowish time, it would make an excellent song. I am highly delighted with it; and if you should think it worthy of your attention, I have a fair dame in my eye to whom I would consecrate it.

As I am just going to bed, I wish you a good night.

No. LXXIII.

MR THOMSON TO BURNS.

25th February, 1795.

I HAVE to thank you, my dear Sir, for two epistles, one containing 'Let me in this ae night;' and the other from Ec-

friend Allan Cunningham, who is quite at home in all connected with that interesting district of Scotland which claims him as one of her gifted sons of song, contributes in his edition of Burns the following lively anecdote:—"Ecclefechan is a little thriving village in Annandale: nor is it more known for its hiring fairs than for beautiful lassies and active young men. The latter, when cudgel-playing was regularly taught to the youth of the Scottish lowlands, distinguished themselves by skill and courage; they did not, however, enjoy their fame without contention: they had frequent feuds with the lads of Lockerby, and their laurels were put in jeopardy. On an old New Year's-day, some thirty years ago, Ecclefechan sent some two hundred 'sticks' against Lockerby: they drew themselves up beside an old fortalice, and intimated their intention of keeping their post till the sun went down:—they bit their thumbs, flourished their oak saplings, and said, 'We wad like to see wha wad hinder us.' This was a matter of joy to the lads of Lockerby: an engagement immediately took place, and Ecclefechan seemed likely to triumph, when—I grieve to write it—a douce elder of the kirk seizing a stick from one who seemed unskilful in using it, rushed forward, broke the enemy's ranks, pushed the lads of Ecclefechan rudely out of the place, and exclaimed, 'That's the way we did lang syne!' The Poet paid Ecclefechan many a visit, friendly and official, and even wrought its almost unpronounceable name into a couple of songs."

clefechan, proving, that drunk or sober, your "mind is never muddy." You have displayed great address in the above song. Her answer is excellent, and at the same time takes away the indelicacy that otherwise would have attached to his entreaties. I like the song as it now stands very much.

I had hopes you would be arrested some days at Ecclefechan, and be obliged to beguile the tedious forenoons by song-making. It will give me pleasure to receive the verses you intend for 'O wat ye wha's in yon town?'

No. LXXIV.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

May, 1795.

ADDRESS TO THE WOOD-LARK.*

Tune—"Where'll bonnie Ann lie."

Or, "Loch-Eroch side."

O STAY, sweet warbling wood-lark, stay,
Nor quit for me the trembling spray,
A hapless lover courts thy lay,
Thy soothing fond complaining.

* The tune to which this address was written, 'Where will bonnie Annie lie?' is sweet; and happily allied to words simple and unaffected, particularly if we take into account the exalted personages who formed the hero and heroine of the song—viz. James, fifth duke, and Ann, duchess of Hamilton. It was written by Allan Ramsay on the eve of their marriage. The following are the two first stanzas:—

HE.

"Where wad bonny Annie lie?
Alane nae mair ye maun lie;
Wad ye a goodman try?
Is that the thing ye're laking?

Again, again that tender part,
That I may catch thy melting art;
For surely that wad touch her heart,
Wha kills me wi' disdaining,

SHE.

Can a lass sae young as I,
Venture on the bridal tie,
Syne down with a goodman lie?
I'm flee'd he keep me wauking." B.

A later version of the song runs as follows:—

Where will bonnie Ann lie?
Where will bonnie Ann lie?
Where will bonnie Ann lie,
I' the cauld nights o' winter, O!

Where but in her true love's bed;
Arms of love around her spread;
Pillow'd on his breast her head,
I' the cauld nights o' winter, O!

There will bonnie Ann lie,
There will bonnie Ann lie,
There will bonnie Ann lie,
I' the cauld nights o' winter, O!

When the storm is raging high,
Calm she'll list it whistling bye!
While cozie in his arms she'll lie,
I' the cauld nights o' winter, O.

Where will bonnie Ann lie?
Where will bonnie Ann lie?
Where will bonnie Ann lie,
I' the cauld nights o' winter, O!

In the arms of wedded love,
Breathing thanks to Him above,
Whose care and goodness she does prove,
I' the cauld nights o' winter, O!

Say, was thy little mate unkind,
And heard thee as the careless wind?
Oh, nocht but love and sorrow join'd,
Sic notes o' wo could wauken.

Thou tells o' never-ending care;
O' speechless grief, and dark despair;
For pity's sake, sweet bird, nae mair!
Or my poor heart is broken!

Let me know, your very first leisure, how you like this song.

ON CHLORIS BEING ILL.

Tune—"Aye wakin, O."

Long, long the night,
Heavy comes the morrow,
While my soul's delight
Is on her bed of sorrow.
Can I cease to care?
Can I cease to languish?
While my darling fair
Is on the couch of anguish?

Every hope is fled,
Every fear is terror;
Slumber even I dread,
Every dream is horror.
Long, long the night,
Heavy comes the morrow,
While my soul's delight
Is on her bed of sorrow.

Hear me, Pow'rs divine!
Oh, in pity hear me!
Take aught else of mine,
But my Chloris spare me!

Long, long the night,
Heavy comes the morrow,
While my soul's delight,
Is on her bed of sorrow.

How do you like the foregoing? The Irish air, 'Humours of Glen,' is a great favourite of mine, and as, except the silly stuff in the 'Poor Soldier,' there are not any decent verses for it, I have written for it as follows:

CALEDONIA.

Tune—"Humours of Glen."

Their groves o' sweet myrtle let foreign lands reckon,
Where bright-beaming summers exalt the perfume,
Far dearer to me yon lone glen o' green breckan,
Wi' the burn stealing under the lang yellow broom.
Far dearer to me are yon humble broom bowers,
Where the blue-bell and gowan lurk lowly unseen:
For there, lightly tripping amang the wild flowers,
A listening the linnet, aft wanders my Jean.

Tho' rich is the breeze in their gay sunny valleys,
And cauld Caledonia's blast on the wave;
Their sweet-scented woodlands that skirt the proud palace,
What are they? The haunt of the tyrant and slave!
The slave's spicy forests, and gold-bubbling fountains,
The brave Caledonian views wi' disdain;
He wanders as free as the winds of his mountains,
Save love's willing fetters, the chains o' his Jean.

'TWAS NA HER BONNIE BLUE E'E.

Tune—"Laddie, lie near me."

'Twas na her bonnie blue e'e was my ruin;
Fair tho' she be, that was ne'er my undoing:

'Twas the dear smile when naebody did mind us,
'Twas the bewitching, sweet stown glance o' kindness.

Sair do I fear that to hope is denied me,
Sair do I fear that despair maun abide me!
But tho' fell fortune should fate us to sever,
Queen shall she be in my bosom for ever.

Mary, I'm thine wi' a passion sincerest,
And thou hast plighted me love o' the dearest!
And thou'rt the angel that never can alter,
Sooner the sun in his motion would falter.

Let me hear from you.

No. LXXV.

MR THOMSON TO BURNS.

You must not think, my good Sir, that I have any intention to enhance the value of my gift, when I say, in justice to the ingenious and worthy artist, that the design and execution of the Cotter's Saturday Night is, in my opinion, one of the happiest productions of Allan's pencil. I shall be grievously disappointed if you are not quite pleased with it.

The figure intended for your portrait, I think strikingly like you, as far as I can remember your phiz. This should make the piece interesting to your family every way. Tell me whether Mrs Burns finds you out among the figures.

I cannot express the feeling of admiration with which I have read your pathetic 'Address to the Wood-lark,' your elegant 'Panegyric on Caledonia,' and your affecting verses on 'Chloris's illness.' Every repeated perusal of these gives new delight. The other song to 'Laddie, lie near me, though not equal to these, is very pleasing.

No. LXXVI.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

HOW CRUEL ARE THE PARENTS.

Tune—"John Anderson, my jo."

How cruel are the parents,
Who riches only prize,
And to the wealthy booby,
Poor woman sacrifice.
Meanwhile the hapless daughter
Has but a choice of strife;
To shun a tyrant father's hate,
Become a wretched wife.

The ravening hawk pursuing,
The trembling dove thus flies
To shun impelling ruin
A while her pinions tries;
Till of escape despairing,
No shelter or retreat,
She trusts the ruthless falconer,
And drops beneath his feet.

MARK YONDER POMP.*

Tune—"Deil tak the wars."

Mark yonder pomp of costly fashion
Round the wealthy, titled bride:
But when compared with real passion,
Poor is all that princely pride.

* I am the last person in the world who would wish to deprive any man of his right, far less a literary one of his merit. My object is not to lessen the talents of my favourite bard, but to illustrate, as far as in me lies, the pieces he has given to the world.

What are the showy treasures?
What are the noisy pleasures?
The gay gaudy glare of vanity and art:
The polished jewel's blaze
May draw the wond'ring gaze,
And courtly grandeur bright
The fancy may delight,
But never, never can come near the heart.

But did you see my dearest Chloris
In simplicity's array;
Lovely as yonder sweet opening flower is,
Shrinking from the gaze of day?
O then, the heart alarming,
And all resistless charming,
In Love's delightful fetters she chains the willing soul!
Ambition would disown
The world's imperial crown,
Even Avarice would deny
His worshipp'd deity.
And feel thro' ev'ry vein Love's raptures roll.

Well! this is not amiss. You see how I answer your orders: your tailor could not be more punctual. I am just

Were he alive at this moment, or his revered shade watching over every sentence as it falls from my pen, I am convinced he would not be displeased with my freedom, nor the candour with which I have pointed out what was, and what really was not, of his composition. The ideas of the first stanza of this song appears to me to have been borrowed from the old love verses that follow:—

"Love's a gentle gen'rous passion!
Source of all sublime delight;
When, with mutual inclination,
Two fond hearts in one unite.

What are titles, pomp, or riches,
If compar'd with true content?
That false joy which now bewitches,
When too late, we may repent." B.

now in a high fit for poetizing, provided that the strait jacket of criticism don't cure me. If you can in a post or two administer a little of the intoxicating portion of your applause, it will raise your humble servant's frenzy to any height you want. I am at this moment "holding high converse" with the Muses, and have not a word to throw away on such a prosaic dog as you are.

No. LXXVII.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

May, 1795.

Ten thousand thanks for your elegant present: though I am ashamed of the value of it being bestowed on a man who has not by any means merited such an instance of kindness. I have shown it to two or three judges of the first abilities here, and they all agree with me in classing it as a first rate production. My phiz is sae kenspeckle, that the very joiner's apprentice whom Mrs Burns employed to break up the parcel (I was out of town that day) knew it at once.—My most grateful compliments to Allan, who has honoured my rustic muse so much with his masterly pencil. One strange coincidence is, that the little one who is making the felonious attempt on the cat's tail, is the most striking likeness of an ill-deedie, d—n'd, wee, rumble-gairie urchin of mine, whom, from that propensity to witty wickedness, and manfu' mischief, which, even at twa days auld, I foresaw would form the striking features of his disposition, I named Willie Nicol, after a certain friend of mine, who is one of the masters of a grammar-school in a city which shall be nameless.*

* In matters of art we are inclined always to defer to the taste of Allan Cunningham, who says of the picture in question: —"The picture alluded to was painted from the 'Cotter's Satur-

Give the inclosed epigram to my much-valued friend Cunningham, and tell him that on Wednesday I go to visit a friend of his, to whom his friendly partiality in speaking of me, in a manner introduced me—I mean a well-known military and literary character, Colonel Dirom.

You do not tell me how you liked my two last songs. Are they condemned?

No. LXXVIII.

MR THOMSON TO BURNS.

13th May, 1795.

It gives me great pleasure to find that you are all so well satisfied with Mr Allan's production. The chance resemblance of your little fellow, whose promising disposition appeared so very early, and suggested whom he should be named after, is curious enough. I am acquainted with that person, who is a prodigy of learning and genius, and a pleasant fellow, though no saint.

You really make me blush when you tell me you have not merited the drawing from me. I do not think I can ever repay you, or sufficiently esteem and respect you for the liberal and kind manner in which you have entered into

day Night:' it displays at once the talent and want of taste of the ingenious artist. The scene is a solemn one: but the serenity of the moment is disturbed by what some esteem as a beauty, namely, the attempt to cut the top of the cat's tail by the little merry urchin seated on the floor. The unity of the sentiment is destroyed; it jars with the harmony of the rest of the picture as much as a snail does in crawling in the bosom of a new opened rose. This sense of propriety is required in such compositions: Burns was a great master in it; he introduced true love, domestic gladness, and love of country along with devotion in his noble poem of 'The Cotter's Saturday Night,' but he never dreamed of throwing in any of his ludicrous or humorous touches—all is as much in keeping as in the best conceived picture."—M.

the spirit of my undertaking, which could not have been perfected without you. So I beg you would not make a fool of me again by speaking of obligation.*

I like your two last songs very much, and am happy to find you are in such a high fit of poetizing. Long may it last! Clarke has made a fine pathetic air to Mallet's superlative ballad of 'William and Margaret,' and is to give it to me, to be enrolled among the elect.

No. LXXIX.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

In 'Whistle, and I'll come to ye, my lad,' the iteration of that line is tiresome to my ear. Here goes what I think is an improvement:

O whistle, and I'll come to ye, my lad;
O whistle, and I'll come to ye, my lad;
Tho' father and mother, and a' should gae mad,
Thy Jeany will venture wi' ye, my lad.

In fact, a fair dame, at whose shrine I, the Priest of the Nine, offer up the incense of Parnassus; a dame whom the Graces have attired in witchcraft, and whom the Loves have armed with lightning, a fair one, herself the heroine of the song, insists on the amendment; and dispute her commands if you dare!

THIS IS NO MY AIN LASSIE.†

Tune—"This is no my ain house."

O this is no my ain lassie,
Fair tho' the lassie be;

* Mr Thomson never said a truer word in his life.—M.

† There is an old song to this tune in Ramsay's Miscellany beginning,—

"This is no mine ain house,
I ken by the rigging o't;

O weel ken I my ain lassie,
Kind love is in her e'e.
I see a form, I see a face,
Ye weel may wi' the fairest place:
It wants, to me, the witching grace,
The kind love that's in her e'e.
O this is no, &c.

She's bonnie, blooming, straight, and tall,
And lang has had my heart in thrall;
And aye it charms my very saul,
The kind love that's in her e'e.
O this is no, &c.

A thief sae pawkie is my Jean,
To steal a blink, by a' unseen;
But gleg as light are lovers een,
When kind love is in the e'e.
O this is no, &c.

It may escape the courtly sparks,
It may escape the learned clerks;
But weel the watching lover marks
The kind love that's in her e'e.

Since with my love I've changed vows,
I dinna like the bigging o't."

Another Jacobite song runs thus:—

"This is nae my plaid,
My plaid, my plaid;
This is nae my plaid,
Bonny tho' the colour be.
The grounds o' mine were mix'd wi' blue,
I gat it frae the lad I lue;
He ne'er has gien me cause to rue,
And oh his plaid is dear to me." B.

O this is no my ain lassie,
Fair tho' the lassie be;
O weel ken I my ain lassie,
Kind love is in her e'e.

Do you know that you have roused the torpidity of Clarke at last? He has requested me to write three or four songs for him, which he is to set to music himself. The inclosed sheet contains two songs for him, which please to present to my valued friend Cunningham.

I inclose the sheet open, both for your inspection, and that you may copy the song, 'O bonnie was yon rosy brier.' I do not know whether I am right; but that song pleases me, and as it is extremely probable that Clarke's newly roused celestial spark will be soon smothered in the fogs of indolence, if you like the song, it may go as Scottish verses, to the air of 'I wish my love was in a mire;' and poor Erskine's English lines may follow.

I inclose you a 'For a' that and a' that,' which was never in print: it is a much superior song to mine. I have been told that it was composed by a lady:—

TO MR CUNNINGHAM.

NOW SPRING HAS CLAD THE GROVE IN GREEN.

SCOTTISH SONG.

Now spring has clad the grove in green,
And strew'd the lea wi' flowers:
The furrow'd, waving corn is seen
Rejoice in fostering showers;
While ilka thing in nature join
Their sorrows to forego,
O why thus all alone are mine
The weary steps of wo?

The trout within yon wimpling burn
Glides swift, a silver dart,

And safe beneath the shady thorn
Defies the angler's art:
My life was ance that careless stream,
That wanton trout was I;
But love, wi' unrelenting beam,
Has scorch'd my fountains dry.

The little flow'ret's peaceful lot,
In yonder cliff that grows,
Which, save the linnet's flight, I wot,
Nae ruder visit knows,
Was mine; till love has o'er me past,
And blighted a' my bloom,
And now beneath the with'ring blast
My youth and joy consume.

The waken'd lav'rock warbling springs,
And climbs the early sky,
Winnowing blithe her dewy wings
In morning's rosy eye;
As little reckt I sorrow's power,
Until the flowery snare
O' witching love, in luckless hour,
Made me the thrall o' care.

O had my fate been Greenland snows,
Or Afric's burning zone,
Wi' man and nature leagu'd my foes,
So Peggy ne'er I'd known!
The wretch whase doom is, "hope nae mair,"
What tongue his woes can tell!
Within whase bosom, save despair,
Nae kinder spirits dwell.

O BONNIE WAS YON ROSY BRIER.

O bonnie was yon rosy brier,
That blooms sae far frae haunt o' man:

And bonnie she, and ah, how dear!
It shaded frae the e'enin sun.

Yon rosebuds in the morning dew,
How pure amang the leaves sae green;
But purer was the lover's vow
They witness'd in their shade yestreen.

All in its rude and prickly bower,
That crimson rose, how sweet and fair!
But love is far a sweeter flower
Amid life's thorny path o' care.

The pathless wild, and wimpling burn,
Wi' Chloris in my arms, be mine;
And I the world, nor wish, nor scorn,
Its joys and griefs alike resign.

Written on the blank leaf of a copy of the last edition of my poems, presented to the lady, whom, in so many fictitious reveries of passion, but with the most ardent sentiments of real friendship, I have so often sung under the name of Chloris:—

TO CHLORIS.

'Tis friendship's pledge, my young, fair friend,
Nor thou the gift refuse,
Nor with unwilling ear attend
The moralizing muse.

Since thou, in all thy youth and charms,
Must bid the world adieu,
(A world 'gainst peace in constant arms)
To join the friendly few.

Since, thy gay morn of life o'ercast,
Chill came the tempest's lower;
(And ne'er misfortune's eastern blast
Did nip a fairer flower.)

Since life's gay scenes must charm no more,
Still much is left behind;
Still nobler wealth hast thou in store,
The comforts of the mind!

Thine is the self-approving glow,
On conscious honour's part;
And, dearest gift of heaven below,
Thine friendship's truest heart.

The joys refin'd of sense and taste,
With every muse to rove:
And doubly were the poet blest
These joys could he improve.

Une bagatelle de l'amitié.—COILA.

No. LXXX.

MR THOMSON TO BURNS.

EDINBURGH, *3d August*, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR,

THIS will be delivered to you by a Dr Brianton, who has read your works, and pants for the honour of your acquaintance. I do not know the gentleman; but his friend, who applied to me for this introduction, being an excellent young man, I have no doubt he is worthy of all acceptation.

My eyes have just been gladdened, and my mind feasted, with your last packet—full of pleasant things indeed. What an imagination is yours! It is superfluous to tell you that

I am delighted with all the three songs, as well as with your elegant and tender verses to Chloris.

I am sorry you should be induced to alter, 'O whistle and I'll come to ye, my lad, to the prosaic line, 'Thy Jenny will venture wi' ye, my lad.' I must be permitted to say, that I do not think the latter either reads or sings so well as the former. I wish, therefore, you would in my name petition the charming Jeany, whoever she be, to let the line remain unaltered.*

I should be happy to see Mr Clarke produce a few airs to be joined to your verses. Every body regrets his writing so very little, as every body acknowledges his ability to write well. Pray was the resolution formed coolly before dinner, or was it a midnight vow made over a bowl of punch with the bard?

I shall not fail to give Mr Cunningham what you have sent him.

P. S.—The lady's, 'For a' that and a' that,' is sensible enough, but no more to be compared to yours than I to Hercules.

No. LXXXI.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

FORLORN, MY LOVE, NO COMFORT NEAR.

Tune—"Let me in this ae night."

FORLORN, my love, no comfort near,
Far, far from thee, I wander here;
Far, far from thee, the fate severe
At which I most repine, love.

* Dr Currie says, he that has heard the heroine of this song sing it herself in the very spirit of arch simplicity that it requires, thinks Mr Thomson's petition unreasonable. If we mistake not, this is the same lady who produced the lines to the tune of 'Roy's Wife.'—M.

O wert thou, love, but near me;
But near, near, near me;
How kindly thou wouldst cheer me,
And mingle sighs with mine, love.

Around me scowls a wintry sky,
That blasts each bud of hope and joy;
And shelter, shade, nor home have I,
Save in those arms of thine, love.
O wert thou, love, &c.

Cold, alter'd friendship's cruel part,
To poison fortune's ruthless dart—
Let me not break thy faithful heart,
And say that fate is mine, love.
O wert thou, love, &c.

But dreary tho' the moments fleet,
O let me think we yet shall meet!
That only ray of solace sweet
Can on thy Chloris shine, love.
O wert thou, love, but near me;
But near, near, near me;
How kindly thou wouldst cheer me,
And mingle sighs with mine, love.

How do you like the foregoing? I have written it within this hour: so much for the speed of my Pegasus, but what say you to his bottom?

No. LXXXII.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

LAST MAY A BRAW WOOER.

Tune—"The Lothian Lassie."

LAST May a braw wooer cam down the lang glen,
And sair wi' his love he did deave me;
I said there was naething I hated like men,
The deuce gae wi'm, to believe me, believe me,
The deuce gae wi'm, to believe me!

He spak o' the darts in my bonnie black een,
And vow'd for my love he was dying;
I said he might die when he liked, for Jean,
The Lord forgie me for lying, for lying,
The Lord forgie me for lying!

A weel-stocked mailen, himself for the laird,
And marriage aff-hand, were his proffers:
I never loot on that I kenn'd it, or car'd,
But thought I might hae waur offers, waur offers,
But thought I might hae waur offers.

But what wad ye think? in a fortnight or less,
The deil tak his taste to gae near her!
He up the lang loan to my black cousin Bess,*

* In the original MS. this line runs, "He up the *Gateslack* to my black cousin Bess." Mr Thomson objected to this word, as well as to the word *Dalgarnock* in the next verse. Mr Burns replies as follows:—

"Gateslack is the name of a particular place, a kind of passage up among the Lawther hills, on the confines of this county. Dalgarnock is also the name of a romantic spot near the Nith, where are still a ruined church and a burial-ground. However, let the first line run, 'He up the lang loan,'" &c.

It is always a pity to throw out any thing that gives locality to our poet's verses.—*Currie.*

Guess ye how, the jad! I could bear her, could bear her,
Guess ye how, the jad! I could bear her.

But a' the niest week as I fretted wi' care,
I gaed to the tryste o' Dalgarnock,
And wha but my fine fickle lover was there,
I glowr'd as I'd seen a warlock, a warlock,
I glowr'd as I'd seen a warlock.

But owre my left shouther I gae him a blink,
Least neebors might say I was saucy;
My wooer he caper'd as he'd been in drink,
And vow'd I was his dear lassie, dear lassie,
And vow'd I was his dear lassie.

I spier'd for my cousin fu' couthy and sweet,
Gin she had recover'd her hearin,
And how her new shoon fit her auld shachl't feet,
But, heavens! how he fell a swearin, a swearin,
But, heavens! how he fell a swearin!

He begged, for Gudesake! I wad be his wife,
Or else I wad kill him wi' sorrow:
So e'en to preserve the poor body in life,
I think I maun wed him to-morrow, to-morrow,
I think I maun wed him to-morrow

FRAGMENT.

CHLORIS.

Tune—"The Caledonian Hunt's Delight."

Why, why tell thy lover,
Bliss he never must enjoy?
Why, why undeceive him,
And give all his hopes the lie?

O why, while fancy, raptur'd, slumbers,
Chloris, Chloris all the theme,
Why, why wouldst thou cruel,
Wake thy lover from his dream?

Such is the peculiarity of the rhythm of this air, that I find it impossible to make another stanza to suit it.

I am at present quite occupied with the charming sensations of the tooth-ach, so have not a word to spare.

No. LXXXIII.

MR THOMSON TO BURNS.

3d June, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR,

YOUR English verses to 'Let me in this ae night,' are tender and beautiful; and your ballad to the 'Lothian Lassie,' is a master-piece for its humour and naïveté. The fragment for the 'Caledonian Hunt' is quite suited to the original measure of the air, and, as it plagues you so, the fragment must content it. I would rather, as I said before, have had Bacchanalian words, had it so pleased the poet; but, nevertheless, for what we have received, Lord, make us thankful!

No. LXXXIV.

MR THOMSON TO BURNS.

5th Feb. 1796.

O Robby Burns, are ye sleeping yet?
Or are ye wauking, I would wit?

THE pause you have made, my dear Sir, is awful! Am I never to hear from you again? I know and I lament

how much you have been afflicted of late, but I trust that returning health and spirits will now enable you to resume the pen, and delight us with your musings. I have still about a dozen Scotch and Irish airs that I wish "married to immortal verse." We have several true born Irishman on the Scottish list; but they are now naturalized, and reckoned our own good subjects. Indeed, we have none better. I believe I before told you that I have been much urged by some friends to publish a collection of all our favourite airs and songs in octavo, embellished with a number of etchings by our ingenious friend Allan; what is your opinion of this?

No. LXXXV.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

February, 1796.

MANY thanks, my dear Sir, for your handsome, elegant present to Mrs Burns, and for my remaining volume of P. Pindar.—Peter is a delightful fellow, and a first favourite of mine. I am much pleased with your idea of publishing a collection of our songs in octavo with etchings. I am extremely willing to lend every assistance in my power. The Irish airs I shall cheerfully undertake the task of finding verses for.

I have already, you know, equipt three with words, and the other day I strung up a kind of rhapsody to another Hibernian melody, which I admire much.

HEY FOR A LASS WI' A TOCHER.

Tune—"Balinamona ora.

Awa wi' your witchcraft o' beauty's alarms,
The slender bit beauty you grasp in your arms:

O, gie me the lass that has acres o' charms,
O, gie me the lass wi' the weel-stockit farms.
Then hey for a lass wi' a tocher,
Then hey for a lass wi' a tocher,
Then hey for a lass wi' a tocher;
The nice yellow guineas for me.

Your beauty's a flower, in the morning that blows,
And withers the faster, the faster it grows;
But the rapturous charm o' the bonnie green knowes,
Ilk spring they're new deckit wi' bonnie white yowes.
Then hey for a lass, &c.

And e'en when this beauty your bosom has blest,
The brightest o' beauty may cloy, when possest;
But the sweet yellow darlings wi' Geordie imprest,
The langer ye hae them—the mair they're carest.
Then hey for a lass wi' a tocher,
Then hey for a lass wi' a tocher,
Then hey for a lass wi' a tocher,
The nice yellow guineas for me.

If this will do, you have now four of my Irish engagement. In my by-past songs I dislike one thing; the name Chloris—I meant it as the fictitious name of a certain lady: but, on second thoughts, it is a high incongruity to have a Greek appellation to a Scottish pastoral ballad.—Of this, and some things else, in my next: I have more amendments to propose.—What you once mentioned of "flaxen locks" is just: they cannot enter into an elegant description of beauty. Of this also again—God bless you!*

*"Our Poet never explained what name he would have substituted for Chloris."—*Note by Mr Thomson.* We agree with his good taste, however, in resolving to reject it.—M.

No. LXXXVI.

MR THOMSON TO BURNS.

YOUR 'Hey for a lass wi' a tocher,' is a most excellent song, and with you the subject is something new indeed. It is the first time I have seen you debasing the god of soft desire, into an amateur of acres and guineas.—

I am happy to find you approve of my proposed octavo edition. Allan has designed and etched about twenty plates, and I am to have my choice of them for that work. Independently of the Hogarthian humour with which they abound, they exhibit the character and costume of the Scottish peasantry with inimitable felicity. In this respect he himself says, they will far exceed the aquatinta plates he did for the Gentle Shepherd, because in the etching he sees clearly what he is doing, but not so with the aquatinta, which he could not manage to his mind.

The Dutch boors of Ostade are scarcely more characteristic and natural than the Scottish figures in those etchings.

No. LXXXVII.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

April, 1796.

ALAS, my dear Thomson, I fear it will be some time ere I tune my lyre again! "By Babel streams I have sat and wept," almost ever since I wrote you last: I have only known existence by the pressure of the heavy hand of sickness, and have counted time by the repercussions of pain! Rheumatism, cold, and fever, have formed to me a terrible combination. I close my eyes in misery, and open them without hope. I look on the vernal day, and say, with poor Fergusson—

> "Say wherefore has an all-indulgent Heaven
> Light to the comfortless and wretched given?"

This will be delivered to you by a Mrs Hyslop, landlady of the Globe Tavern here, which for these many years has been my howff, and where our friend Clarke and I have had many a merry squeeze.* I am highly delighted with Mr

* Like the *Boar's Head* in Eastcheap, and the *Mermaid* in Friday-street, London, immortalized as these have been by the genius and wit of Shakspeare, Beaumont, Fletcher, and Ben Jonson, and many other of the prime spirits of their age, so the Globe Tavern in Dumfries, the favourite haunt of our Poet, while resident in that town, appears to be destined to a similar acceptation in the eyes of posterity. Unacquainted as we are with the localities of Dumfries, we are constrained to borrow from Allan Cunningham's edition of Burns' works, the following description of the tavern in question, and anecdote respecting the Poet:—"The 'howff' of which Burns speaks, was a small, comfortable tavern, situated in the mouth of the Globe close, and it held at that time the rank as third among the houses of public accommodation in Dumfries. The excellence of the drink and the attentions of the proprietor were not, however, all its attractions: 'Anna with the gowden locks' was one of the ministering damsels of the establishment: customers loved to be served by one who was not only cheerful, but whose charms were celebrated by the Bard of Kyle. On one of the last visits paid by the Poet, the wine of the 'howff' was more than commonly strong—or, served by Anna, it went more glibly over than usual; and when he rose to begone, he found he could do no more than keep his balance. The night was frosty and the hour late: the Poet sat down on the steps of a door between the tavern and his own house, fell asleep, and did not awaken till he was almost dead with cold. To this exposure his illness has been imputed; and no doubt it contributed, with disappointed hope and insulted pride, to bring him to an early grave."

On the panes of glass in the Globe, Burns was frequently in the habit of writing many of his witty *jeux d'esprit*, as well as fragmentary portions of his most celebrated songs. We fear these precious relics have now been wholly abstracted by the lovers and collectors of literary rarities. In the possession of John Speirs, Esq. of this city, we have seen one of these panes of glass, upon which is written in Burns' autograph, the following verse of 'Sae flaxen were her ringlets,' a song given in a preceding portion of this volume:—

Hers are the willing chains of love,
By conquering Beauty's sovereign law;
But still my Chloris' dearest charm,
She says she lo'es me best of a! M.

Allan's etchings. "Woo'd and married an' a', is admirable. The grouping is beyond all praise. The expression of the figures, conformable to the story in the ballad, is absolutely faultless perfection. I next admire 'Turnimspike.' What I like least is, 'Jenny said to Jocky.' Besides the female being in her appearance * * * * * if you take her stooping into the account, she is at least two inches taller than her lover. Poor Cleghorn! I sincerely sympathize with him! Happy I am to think that he yet has a well-grounded hope of health and enjoyment in this world. As for me—but that is a damn'd subject!

No. LXXXVIII.

MR THOMSON TO BURNS.

4th May, 1796.

I NEED not tell you, my good Sir, what concern the receipt of your last gave me, and how much I sympathize in your sufferings. But do not, I beseech you, give yourself up to despondency, nor speak the language of despair. The vigour of your constitution, I trust, will soon set you on your feet again; and then it is to be hoped you will see the wisdom and the necessity of taking due care of a life so valuable to your family, to your friends, and to the world.

Trusting that your next will bring agreeable accounts of your convalescence, and returning good spirits, I remain, with sincere regard, yours.

P. S. Mrs Hyslop, I doubt not, delivered the gold seal to you in good condition. *

* Regarding this seal Mr Cunningham has the following interesting notice:—"On this gold seal the Poet caused his coat of arms to be engraven:—*viz.* a small bush; a bird singing; the legend 'woodnotes wild,' with the motto 'better hae a wee bush than nae bield.' This precious relic is now in the proper keeping of the Poet's brother-in-law, Robert Armour, of Old 'Change, London."—M.

No. LXXXIX.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

MY DEAR SIR,

I ONCE mentioned to you an air which I have long admired—'Here's a health to them that's awa, hiney,' but I forget if you took any notice of it. I have just been trying to suit it with verses; and I beg leave to recommend the air to your attention once more. I have only begun it.

JESSY.

Tune—"Here's a health to them that's awa."

Here's a health to ane I lo'e dear,
Here's a health to ane I lo'e dear;
Thou art sweet as the smile when fond lovers meet,
And soft as their parting tear—Jessy!
Altho' thou maun never be mine,
Altho' even hope is denied;
'Tis sweeter for thee despairing,
Than aught in the world beside—Jessy!
Here's a health, &c.

I mourn thro' the gay, gaudy day,
As, hopeless, I muse on thy charms;
But welcome the dream o' sweet slumber,
For then I am lockt in thy arms—Jessy!
Here's a health, &c.

I guess by the dear angel smile,
I guess by the love-rolling e'e;
But why urge the tender confession
'Gainst fortune's fell cruel decree—Jessy!

Here's a health to ane I lo'e dear,
Here's a health to ane I lo'e dear;
Thou art sweet as the smile when fond lovers meet,
And soft as their parting tear—Jessy! *

No. XC.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

This will be delivered by a Mr Lewars, a young fellow of uncommon merit. As he will be a day or two in town, you will have leisure, if you choose, to write me by him: and if you have a spare half hour to spend with him, I shall place your kindness to my account. I have no copies of the songs I have sent you, and I have taken a fancy to review them all, and possibly may mend some of them; so when you have complete leisure, I will thank you for either the originals or copies.† I had rather be the author of five well-written songs, than of ten otherwise. I have great hopes that the genial influence of the approaching summer will set me to rights, but as yet I cannot boast of returning health. I have now reason to believe that my complaint is a flying gout: a sad business!

Do let me know how Cleghorn is, and remember me to him.

This should have been delivered to you a month ago. I am still very poorly, but should like much to hear from you.

* In the letter to Mr Thomson, the three first stanzas only are given, and Mr Thomson supposed our poet had never gone farther. Among his MSS. was, however, found the fourth stanza, which completes this exquisite song, the last finished offspring of his muse.—*Currie.*

The heroine of this beautiful lyric was Miss Jessie Lewars, now Mrs Thomson of Dumfries, whose kind attentions smoothed the pillow of the Poet in his latter days of illness, anguish, and despair.—M.

† It is needless to say, that this revisal Burns did not live to perform.—*Currie.*

No. XCI.

BURNS TO MR THOMSON.

BROW, ON THE SOLWAY-FRITH, 12*th July*, 1796.

AFTER all my boasted independence, curst necessity compels me to implore you for five pounds. A cruel bitch of a haberdasher, to whom I owe an account, taking it into his head that I am dying, has commenced a process, and will infallibly put me into jail. Do, for God's sake, send me that sum, and that by return of post. Forgive me this earnestness, but the horrors of a jail have made me half distracted. I do not ask all this gratuitously; for, upon returning health, I hereby promise and engage to furnish you with five pounds worth of the neatest song genius you have seen. I tried my hand on 'Rothemurche' this morning. The measure is so difficult, that it is impossible to infuse much genius into the lines; they are on the other side. Forgive, forgive me!

FAIREST MAID ON DEVON BANKS.

Tune—"Rothemurche."

Fairest maid on Devon banks,
Crystal Devon, winding Devon,
Wilt thou lay that frown aside,
And smile as thou were wont to do?
Full well thou know'st I love thee dear,
Couldst thou to malice lend an ear!
O, did not love exclaim, "Forbear,
Nor use a faithful lover so."

Then come, thou fairest of the fair,
Those wonted smiles, O let me share;
And, by thy beauteous self I swear,
No love but thine my heart shall know.

Fairest maid on Devon banks,
Crystal Devon, winding Devon,
Wilt thou lay that frown aside,
And smile as thou were wont to do ?*

No. XCII.

MR THOMSON TO BURNS.

14*th July*, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR,

EVER since I received your melancholy letter, by Mrs Hyslop, I have been ruminating in what manner I could endeavour to alleviate your sufferings. Again and again I thought of a pecuniary offer, but the recollection of one of your letters on this subject, and the fear of offending your independent spirit, checked my resolution. I thank you heartily therefore for the frankness of your letter of the 12th, and with great pleasure inclose a draft for the very sum I proposed sending. Would I were Chancellor of the Exchequer but for one day, for your sake !†

* These verses, and the letter inclosing them, are written in a character that marks the very feeble state of Burns' bodily strength. Mr Syme is of opinion that he could not have been in any danger of a jail at Dumfries, where certainly he had many firm friends, nor under any such necessity of imploring aid from Edinburgh. But about this time his reason began to be at times unsettled, and the horrors of a jail perpetually haunted his imagination. He died on the 21st of this month.—*Currie.*

† Mr Thomson has been very much abused about this transaction, and, I confess, I do not know well what to say about it; but it must ever be regretted that George Thomson did not contrive to send him more at this dismal period than just the bare five pounds, when he could not but perceive the gloomy and altered state of the Poet's mind. After Burns' letter of July, 1793, I exculpate Mr Thomson from making any attempts at remuneration, previous to the receiving this letter from Brow. But, all things considered, I wish to God he had sent him at least ten or twenty pounds, for his own honour, and that of the literary

Pray, my good Sir, is it not possible for you to muster a volume of poetry? If too much trouble to you in the present state of your health, some literary friend might be found here, who would select and arrange from your manuscripts, and take upon him the task of Editor. In the mean time, it could be advertised to be published by subscription. Do not shun this mode of obtaining the value of your labour: remember Pope published the Iliad by subscription. Think of this, my dear Burns, and do not reckon me intrusive with my advice. You are too well convinced of the respect and friendship I bear you, to impute any thing I say to an unworthy motive. Yours faithfully.

The verses to 'Rothemurche' will answer finely. I am happy to see you can still tune your lyre.

and musical character. I am quite aware that Mr Thomson, at that period, could not have made any money off Burns' songs, but that on the contrary, he must have been much money out of pocket, considering the efficient and costly way he took of bringing out the work. But then the songs were his, and poor Burns had toiled for him, while at the same time the speculation was certain and sure. Upon the whole I cannot account for Mr Thomson's parsimony here; for I know him well, and he is any thing but a close-fisted niggardly gentleman. In fact, he is quite the reverse, a kind open hearted fellow, who entertains literary and musical people most liberally, as many of my acquaintances can witness. I have written a good many songs for him myself, and it was not for want of remuneration that I did not write far more; but then he is the most troublesome devil to write songs for that ever was created, for he is always either bothering one with alterations, or else popping them in himself. But, as to niggardliness in remuneration, I can bear testimony that he rather errs on the other side; and, as an instance, I was once out of pure shame obliged to return him a violin, which I was told was valued at £35, on pretence that I had a better one, and could not be plagued with another. Both Mrs Hogg and I, had previously got presents of sterling value. George Thomson is a pragmatical but real good man. What was done cannot be recalled; but it has been compensated since by every kindness in his power to bestow.—H.

Thus terminated the correspondence of Burns with Thomson, in a manner as melancholy as it commenced joyously,—it ended in the death of one who was, and we believe, ever will be, considered the first lyrist of his native land. On the willows of the winding Devon, the dying Bard suspended the harp of Coila, and long we fear is it destined to remain mute; for what masterhand can again touch its strings with such exquisite simplicity, skill, pathos, passion, and truth?

In closing this portion of Burns' works, we can scarcely trust ourself to the expression of our own individual feelings. Men differently constituted feel and think differently; and hence, were we on this occasion to say what, on a review of the correspondence now before us, we both feel and think, our sentiments perhaps would merely represent our own peculiar idiosyncracies, instead of reflecting the sentiments and emotions of the greater bulk of mankind. Still it is a deeply affecting sight to behold a fellow-being of exalted genius, of a proud and peculiarly sensitive spirit, and a truly generous heart, in the very prime of his days smitten with disease, slighted or shunned in a great measure by former friends or those he deemed such, involved in misfortunes, and, by causes which need not be enumerated, steeped comparatively to the lips in poverty, stretched upon the bed of sickness, of suffering, and death, in circumstances so hapless and forlorn, so totally cheerless and desolate, as almost to leave no tender regret in his bosom at parting with all he once held dear or esteemed lovely on earth;—or, using his own emphatic words, to sing, broken in spirit and withered at heart,

> Farewell thou fair day, thou green earth, and ye skies,
> Now gay with the bright setting sun;
> Farewell loves and friendships, ye dear tender ties,
> Our race of existence is run.

We attach blame to no one and to no party; but we cannot conceal from ourself the mournful fact, knowing, as we almost fancy we do, the writhings and workings of such a mind as Burns was endowed with, that he literally died of a broken heart.

With our friend the Shepherd, we must ever regret that Mr Thomson was so exactly mercantile as to inclose to the dying poet precisely the sum which he sought the loan of, and what is still more curious, the precise sum which he, Mr Thomson, "proposed sending" apparently before; as may be inferred from his own words, he was aware of Burns' peculiarly embarrassed pecuniary circumstances, and almost hopeless state of health. Alluding to this subject, Mr Lockhart, in his admirable Life of the Poet, says, and we agree with him in opinion: "Why Burns, who was of opinion when he wrote his letter to Mr Carfrae, that 'no profits are more honourable than those of the labours of a man of genius,' and whose own notions of independence had sustained no shock on the receipt of hundreds of pounds from Creech,

should have spurned the suggestion of pecuniary recompense from Mr Thomson, it is no easy matter to explain: nor do I profess to understand why Mr Thomson took so little pains to argue the matter *in limine* with the poet, and convince him that the time which he himself considered as fairly entitled to be paid for by a common bookseller, ought of right to be valued and acknowledged on similar terms by the editor and proprietor of a book containing both songs and music."

Thus far Mr Lockhart; but to complete the history of the point under discussion, and in justice to Mr Thomson, we deem it right to subjoin also the observations of our late much esteemed friend, Professor Walker, who drew up the Life prefixed to Morrison of Perth's edition of the Poet's works. His history of the transaction is this:

"In 1792, Mr Thomson solicited Burns to supply him with twenty or thirty songs, for the great musical work in which he was then engaged, with an understanding distinctly specified, that the Bard should receive a regular pecuniary remuneration for his contributions. With the first part of the proposal Burns instantly complied, but peremptorily rejected the last. His motive for this rejection, and for his subsequent refusal of an offer from the editor of the Morning Chronicle, to allow him £50 per annum, for a periodical copy of verses, must have been some perplexed and ill-regulated sentiments of pride. It was equally creditable to receive a compensation for his mental as for his manual labour; nor was the work of his pen less entitled to reward than the work of his plough, on which he was fond of resting his claim to independence. But, whatever were his motives, he entered on his gratuitous task with an eagerness and delight which showed that, though he might, perhaps, not have prescribed it for himself, yet when turned to it by the gentle compulsion of a friend's entreaty, he found it still possessed of its original attractions. Through the whole of his remaining years he continued supplying Mr Thomson with songs, of which many are singularly excellent; and even the most careless, like the shortest letters of Dr Johnson, contain some turn of thought or expression which is characteristic of their author, and which serves to stamp them as the productions of Burns.

"This employment led him into a close correspondence with Mr Thomson; and that gentleman, a few months after its commencement, ventured, notwithstanding the original prohibition, to acknowledge his services by a pecuniary present, which the Poet with some difficulty restrained himself from returning, but intimated very explicitly, that a repetition of the measure should be a rupture of their connection. Mr Thomson had therefore no alternative, but that of losing entirely the valuable aid of Burns, or of putting a force on his just and anxious desire to reward it; and all that he could do, after what had passed, was to send occasionally some presents of a nature at which he thought the punc-

tilious delicacy of the Poet would be least disposed to take offence. A few days before Burns expired he applied to Mr Thomson for a loan of £5, in a note which showed the irritable and distracted state of his mind, and his commendable judgment instantly remitted the precise sum, foreseeing that had he, at that moment, presumed to exceed the request, he would have exasperated the irritation and resentment of the haughty invalid, and done him more injury, by agitating his passions, than could be repaired by administering more largely to his wants.

"These particulars are stated chiefly to create occasion for noticing a harsh and calumnious attack which has been lately made against Mr Thomson for his selfish and illiberal treatment of Burns. This attack is introduced into a novel with the title of Nubilia, and is indeed almost the only novelty which it contains. When the author charges Mr Thomson with 'having enriched himself with the labour of Burns,' without a disposition to reward it, he betrays a gross inattention to their correspondence, every line of which he ought to have considered before venturing on his invective; and discovers incapacity to penetrate the sinuosities of the Poet's character, which ought to have deterred him from the attempt. Burns had all the unmanageable pride of Samuel Johnson, and if the latter threw away with indignation the new shoes which had been placed at his chamber-door, secretly and collectively by his companions, the former would have been still more ready to resent any pecuniary donation with which a single individual, after his peremptory prohibition, should avowedly have dared to insult him. He would instantly have construed such conduct into a virtual assertion, that his prohibition was insincere and his independence affected; and the more artfully the transaction had been disguised, the more rage it would have excited, as implying the same assertion with the additional charge, that if secretly made it would not be denied. But on this subject the public may have an opportunity of hearing Mr Thomson himself, who, in a letter to the author of the present memoir, expresses himself thus:—

"In a late anonymous novel I have been attacked with much bitterness, and accused of not endeavouring to remunerate Burns for the songs which he wrote for my collection, although there is the clearest evidence of the contrary, both in the printed correspondence between the poet and me, and in the public testimony of Dr Currie. My assailant too, without knowing any thing of the matter, states that I had enriched myself by the labours of Burns; and, of course, that my want of generosity was inexcusable.

"Now the fact is, that, notwithstanding the united labours of all the men of genius who have enriched my collection, I am not even yet compensated for the precious time consumed by me in poring over musty volumes, and in corresponding with every

amateur and poet by whose means I expected to make any valuable additions to our national music and song;—for the exertion and money it cost me to obtain accompaniments from the greatest masters of harmony in Vienna;—and for the sums paid to engravers, printers, and others. On this subject the testimony of Mr Preston in London, a man of unquestionable and well known character, who has printed the music for every copy of my work, may be more satisfactory than any thing I can say. In August 1809, he wrote me as follows:

"'I am concerned at the very unwarrantable attack which has been made upon you by the author of Nubilia: nothing could be more unjust than to say that you had enriched yourself by Burns' labours: for the whole concern, though it includes the labours of Haydn, has scarcely afforded a compensation for the various expenses and for the time employed on the work. When a work attains any celebrity, publishers are generally supposed to derive a profit ten times beyond the reality: the sale is greatly magnified, and the expenses are not in the least taken into consideration. It is truly vexatious to be so grossly and scandalously abused for conduct, the very reverse of which has been manifest through the whole transaction.'"

"Were I the sordid man that the anonymous author calls me, I had a most inviting opportunity to profit much more than I did by the lyrics of our great Bard. He had written above fifty songs expressly for my work; they were in my possession unpublished at his death; I had the right and the power of retaining them till I was ready to publish them; but when I was informed that an edition of the Poet's works was projected for the benefit of his family, I put them in immediate possession of the whole of his songs, as well as letters, and thus enabled Dr Currie to complete the four volumes which were sold for the family's behoof to Messrs Cadell & Davies. And I have the satisfaction of knowing, that the most zealous friends of the family, Mr Cunningham, Mr Syme, Dr Currie, and the Poet's own brother, considered my sacrifice of the prior right of publishing the songs as no ungrateful return for the disinterested and liberal conduct of the Poet. Accordingly, Mr Gilbert Burns, in a letter to me, which alone might suffice for an answer to all the novelist's abuse, thus expresses himself:—'If ever I come to Edinburgh, I will certainly call on a person whose handsome conduct to my brother's family has secured my esteem, and confirmed me in the opinion, that musical taste and talents have a close connection with the harmony of the moral feelings.'

"Nothing is farther from my thoughts, than to claim any merit for what I did; I never would have uttered a word on the subject, but for the harsh and groundless accusation which has been brought forward, either by ignorance or animosity, and which I have long suffered to remain unnoticed from my great dislike to any public appearance.

"This statement supersedes the necessity of any additional remark. When the public is satisfied; when the relations of Burns are grateful; and, above all, when the delicate mind of Mr Thomson is at peace with itself, in contemplating his conduct, there can be no necessity for a nameless novelist to contradict them all, and to work himself into a fever of malignant benevolence to relieve the general tameness of his performance."—M.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE.

We have now reached the General Correspondence of the Poet, which we have arranged as nearly as positive dates and other means of evidence would enable us to do, in chronological order. In some cases it is likely we may have erred, although unintentionally, as well as differed from former editors in our arrangement; but this deviation has never arisen but from a patient consideration of every fact and circumstance, calculated to throw light upon the individual point under investigation.

The letters of Burns,—addressed as they are, to persons moving in the higher as well as the middling and lower ranks of society, embracing as they do, a great variety of topics, and containing much connected with his own private and domestic concernments, his feelings and opinions, under peculiar circumstances, either of adversity or prosperity, as well as detailing his progress in literary attainments, and exhibiting the progressive developement of the powers of that extraordinary genius, which was fated briefly but brightly to illumine his native land with a splendour, which, if equalled, was never surpassed by any one who ever struck the Scottish lyre,—are peculiarly valuable as forming the best of all narratives of the outgoings and

incomings, nay, even the shortcomings, waywardnesses, and wanderings of that most original, extraordinary, and master spirit. Respecting the literary merit of these letters, we prefer recording the opinions of eminent critics, to any thing we ourselves could say. We begin with Hazlitt, who says:—"His prose epistles are sometimes tinctured with affectation. They seem written by a man who has been admired for his wit, and is expected on all occasions to shine. Those in which he expresses his ideas of natural beauty, in reference to Alison's Essay on Taste, and advocates the keeping up the remembrance of old customs and seasons, are most powerfully written." It would be unjust to omit here what the late amiable Dr Currie, the first editor of Burns' works, has said of his prose letters in the "Advertisement," prefixed to the volume containing his correspondence:—"It is impossible," says he, "to dismiss this volume of the correspondence of our Bard, without some anxiety as to the reception it may meet with. The experiment we are making has not often been tried; perhaps on no occasion has so large a portion of the recent and unpremeditated effusions of a man of genius been committed to the press.

"Of the following letters of Burns, a considerable number were transmitted for publication by the individuals to whom they were addressed; but very few have been printed entire. It will easily be believed, that, in a series of letters, written without the least view to publication, various passages were found unfit for the press, from different considerations. It will also be readily supposed, that our Poet, writing nearly at the same time, and under the same feelings to different individuals, would sometimes fall into the same train of sentiment and forms of expression. To avoid, therefore

the tediousness of such repetitions, it has been found necessary to mutilate many of the individual letters, and sometimes to exscind parts of great delicacy—the unbridled effusions of panegyric and regard. But though many of the letters are printed from originals furnished by the persons to whom they were addressed, others are printed from first draughts, or sketches, found among the papers of our Bard. Though in general no man committed his thoughts to his correspondents with less consideration or effort than Burns, yet it appears that in some instances he was dissatisfied with his first essays, and wrote out his communications in a fairer character, or perhaps in more studied language. In the chaos of his manuscripts, some of the original sketches were found: and as these sketches, though less perfect, are fairly to be considered as the offspring of his mind, where they have seemed in themselves worthy of a place in this volume, we have not hesitated to insert them, though they may not always correspond exactly with the letters transmitted, which have been lost or withheld.

"Our author appears at one time to have formed an intention of making a collection of his letters for the amusement of a friend. Accordingly he copied an inconsiderable number of them into a book, which he presented to Robert Riddel, of Glenriddel, Esq. Among these was the account of his life, addressed to Dr Moore, and printed in the first volume. In copying from his imperfect sketches (it does not appear that he had the letters actually sent to his correspondents before him), he seems to have occasionally enlarged his observations, and altered his expressions. In such instances his emendations have been adopted; but in truth there are but five of the letters thus selected

by the Poet, to be found in the present volume, the rest being thought of inferior merit, or otherwise unfit for the public eye.

"In printing this volume, the Editor has found some corrections of grammar necessary; but these have been very few, and such as may be supposed to occur in the careless effusions, even of literary characters, who have not been in the habit of carrying their compositions to the press. These corrections have never been extended to any habitual modes of expression of the poet, even where his phraseology may seem to violate the delicacies of taste; or the idiom of our language, which he wrote in general with great accuracy. Some difference will indeed be found in this respect in his earlier and in his later compositions; and this volume will exhibit the progress of his style, as well as the history of his mind. In the fourth edition, several new letters were introduced, and some of inferior importance were omitted."

What is stated in the above extract with regard to the letters omitted in the fourth edition as of "inferior importance," have, in the present complete edition, been restored, as well as many of the passages in others which Dr Currie thought proper to exscind for reasons not very obvious to us, or at any rate, which do not now exist to warrant their suppression.

Of his correspondence, Mr Lockhart thus speaks with all the generous feeling of a congenial and sympathising mind:—

"From the time that Burns settled himself in Dumfriesshire, he appears to have conducted with much care the extensive correspondence in which his celebrity had engaged him; it is, however, very necessary in judging of these letters, and drawing inferences from their language as

to the real sentiments and opinions of the writer, to take into consideration the rank and character of the persons to whom they were severally addressed, and the measure of intimacy which really subsisted between them and the Poet. In his letters, as in his conversation, Burns, in spite of all his pride, did something to accommodate himself to his company: and he who did write the series of letters addressed to Mrs Dunlop, Dr Moore, Mr Dugald Stewart, Miss Chalmers, and others, eminently distinguished as these are by purity, and nobleness of feeling, and perfect propriety of language, presents himself, in other effusions of the same class, in colours which it would be rash to call his own. In a word, whatever of grossness of thought, or rant, extravagance, and fustian in expression may be found in his correspondence, ought, I cannot doubt, to be mainly ascribed to his desire of accommodating himself, for the moment, to the habits and taste of certain buckish tradesmen of Edinburgh, and other such like persons, whom, from circumstances already sufficiently noticed, he numbered among his associates and friends. That he should have condescended to any such compliance, must be regretted; but, in most cases, it would probably be quite unjust to push our censure further than this."

The critique upon his prose writings by Professor Walker, which we subjoin, is equally worthy of perusal:—

"The prose writings of Burns consist almost solely of his correspondence, and are therefore to be considered as presenting no sufficient criterion of his powers. Epistolary effusions, being a sort of written conversation, participate in many of the advantages and defects of discourse. They materially vary, both in subject and manner, with the character of the person addressed, to which the mind of

their author for the moment assumes an affinity. To equals they are familiar and negligent, and to superiors they can scarcely avoid that transition, to careful effort and studied correctness, which the behaviour of the writer would undergo, when entering the presence of those to whom his talents were his only introduction. Burns, from the lowness of his origin, found himself inferior in rank to all his correspondents, except his father and brother; and, although the superiority of his genius should have done more than correct this disparity of condition, yet between pretensions so incommensurable it is difficult to produce a perfect equality. Burns evidently labours to reason himself into a feeling of its completeness, but the very frequency of his efforts betrays his dissatisfaction with their success, and he may therefore be considered as writing under the influence of a desire to create or to preserve the admiration of his correspondents. In this object he must certainly have succeeded; for if his letters are deficient in some of the charms of epistolary writing, the deficiency is supplied by others. If they occasionally fail in colloquial ease and simplicity, they abound in genius, in richness of sentiment, and strength of expression. The taste of Burns, according to the judgment of Professor Stewart, was not sufficiently correct and refined to relish chaste and artless prose, but was captivated by writers who labour their periods into a pointed and antithetical brilliancy. What he preferred he would naturally be ambitious to imitate; and though he might have chosen better models, yet those which were his choice he has imitated with success. Even in poetry, if we may judge from his few attempts in English heroi[illegible] as far from attaining, and perhaps from [illegible] flowing

sweetness of Goldsmith, as he is in his letters from aiming at the graceful ease of Addison, or the severe simplicity of Swift. Burns in his prose seems never to have forgot that he was a poet; but, though his style may be taxed with occasional luxuriance, and with the admission of crowded and even of compounded epithets, few will deny that genius is displayed in their invention and application as few will deny that there is eloquence in the harangue of an Indian Sachem, although it be not in the shape to which we are accustomed, nor pruned of its flowers by the critical exactness of a British orator.

" It is to be observed, however, that Burns could diversify his style with great address to suit the taste of his various correspondents; and that when he occasionally swells it into declamation, or stiffens it into pedantry, it is for the amusement of an individual whom he knew it would amuse, and should not be mistaken for the style which he thought most proper for the public. The letter to his father, for whom he had a deep veneration, and of whose applause he was no doubt desirous, is written with care, but with no exuberance. It is grave, pious, and gloomy, like the mind of the person who was to receive it. In his correspondence with Dr Blair, Mr Stewart, Mr Graham, and Mr Erskine, his style has a respectful propriety, and a regulated vigour, which show a just conception of what became himself, and suited his relation with the persons whom he addressed. He writes to Mr Nicol in a vein of strong and ironical extravagance, which was congenial to the manner, and adapted to the taste, of his friend. To his female correspondents, without excepting the venerable Mrs Dunlop, he is lively, and sometimes romantic; and a skilful critic may perceive his pen under the influence of

that tenderness for the feminine character, which has been already noticed. In short, through the whole collection, we see various shades of gravity and care, or of sportive pomp and intentional affectation, according to the familiarity which subsisted between the writer and the person for whose exclusive perusal he wrote: and before we estimate the merit of any single letter, we should know the character of both correspondents, and the measure of their intimacy. These remarks are suggested by the objections of a distinguished critic, to a letter which was communicated to Mr Cromek, without its address, by the author of this memoir, and which occurs at page 116 of the 'Reliques.' The censure would perhaps have been softened, had the critic been aware that the tumidity which he blames, was no serious attempt at fine writing, but merely a playful effusion in mock-heroic, to divert a friend whom he had formerly succeeded in diverting with similar sallies. Burns was sometimes happy in short complimentary addresses, of which a specimen is subjoined. It is inscribed on the blank-leaf of a book presented to Mrs Graham of Fintry, from which it was copied, by that lady's permission :—

TO MRS GRAHAM OF FINTRY.

"'It is probable, Madam, that this page may be read when the hand that now writes it shall be mouldering in the dust: may it then bear witness that I present you these volumes as a tribute of gratitude, on my part ardent and sincere, as your and Mr Graham's goodness to me has been generous and noble! May every child of yours, in the hour of need, find such a friend as I shall teach every child of mine, that their father found in you.

ROBERT BURNS.'

"The letters of Burns may on the whole be regarded as a valuable offering to the public. They are curious, as evidences of his genius, and interesting, as keys to his character; and they can scarcely fail to command the admiration of all who do not measure their pretensions by an unfair standard."

These remarks we look upon as peculiarly just and pertinent; other critics, however, express themselves in a somewhat different strain. Of these, we think the most unjust has been Jeffrey, in his review of Cromek's Reliques of Burns, where he says—"The prose works of Burns consist almost entirely of his letters. They bear, as well as his poetry, the seal and the impress of his genius; but they contain much more bad taste, and are written with far more apparent labour. His poetry was almost all primarily from feeling, and only secondarily from ambition. His letters seem to have been nearly all composed as exercises, and for display. There are few of them written with simplicity or plainness; and, though natural enough as to the sentiment, they are generally very strained and elaborate in the expression. A very great proportion of them too, relate neither to facts nor feelings peculiarly connected with the author or his correspondent—but are made up of general declamation, moral reflections, and vague discussions,—all evidently composed for the sake of effect, and frequently introduced with long complaints of having nothing to say, and of the necessity and difficulty of letter-writing." In this opinion, so unqualifiedly given by one of our first arbiters of taste in matters literary, we are not aware that many have concurred; and we believe a larger proportion will subscribe to the more mild judgment pronounced by Sir Walter Scott. "The letters of Burns,"

says he, "although containing passages of great eloquence, bear occasionally strong marks of affectation, with a tincture of pedantry rather foreign to the Bard's character and education. They are written in various tones of feeling and moods of mind: in some instances exhibiting all the force of the writer's talents, in others only valuable because they bear his signature."

And are they not valuable inasmuch as they do bear that signature? The devotion with which the memory of Burns is cherished by his countrymen has rendered the meanest trifle which he penned inestimable in their eyes, and the same may be said with regard to the lightest and most careless effusions of the gifted spirit whom we have quoted, now since he has been called to mingle with ancestral dust within the hallowed precincts of Dryburgh abbey.

We conclude our extracts on this subject with what Professor Wilson, in an eloquent article on Lockhart's Life of Burns, has delivered as his deliberate sentiments regarding the Poet's correspondence:—"Not a few absurd things," says the noble-hearted author of the Isle of Palms, "have in our opinion been said of Burns' epistolary composition. His letters are said to be too elaborate, the expression more studied and artificial than belongs to that species of composition. Now the truth is, that Burns never considered letter-writing 'a species of composition,' subject to certain rules of taste and criticism. That had never occurred to him—and so much the better. Accordingly his letters are often full of all sorts of rant and rhodomontade, which to us, reading them coldly in our closets, and but little acquainted, and still less perhaps, sympathising with the facetious persons to whom they were written, not unfrequently appear too extravagant for common use,

and not even either humorous or witty. But such strange stuff suited those to whom it was sent; and Burns, with all his own true and genuine humour and wit, enjoyed—and it is a proof of his original genius that he did so—whatever sort of absurdity happened to be popular among his friends and boon companions. Besides, there can be no doubt that he was often tipsy when engaged in penning epistles, and, we do not fear to say it, intoxicated; on one occasion we know—the letter we believe is to Nicol, 'that strong inknee'd soul of a schoolmaster'—perfectly drunk. Vast numbers of his letters were after-dinner effusions—many after-supper ones; and we beg that our forenoon and small-beer critical brethren will, if possible, attend to that peculiarity in Burns' character as a complete letter-writer in all their future octavos. But hundreds even of his most familiar letters are perfectly artless, though still most eloquent compositions. Simple we may not call them, so rich they are in fancy, so overflowing in feeling, and dashed off, every other paragraph, with the easy boldness of a great master conscious of his strength, even at times when, of all things in the world, he was least solicitous about display. While some there are so solemn—so sacred—so religious—that he who can read them with an unstirred heart, as he knows that they were written in the prospect of near and certain death, can have no trust—no hope of the immortality of the soul."

The exhibition of the conflicting opinions expressed by various distinguished literary characters regarding the merits of Burns' epistolary writings, if not altogether satisfactory, is at least useful in directing the attention of the general reader to a more minute and careful consideration of those material points, upon which doctors have chosen

to disagree, and thereafter to decide for themselves. Controversy about matters of taste is endless, and seems never destined to be governed by any fixed rules, or decided by reference to any generally acknowledged or indisputable standard of truth and purity.—M.

No. I.

TO WILLIAM BURNESS.*

IRVINE, *Dec. 27th*, 1781.

HONOURED SIR,

I HAVE purposely delayed writing, in the hope that I should have the pleasure of seeing you on New-Year's day; but work comes so hard upon us, that I do not

* At the time Burns wrote this melancholy letter, he had begun the world as a flaxdresser in Irvine, along with another young man, and four days afterwards their whole worldly means were accidentally destroyed by fire, an event in the life of the Poet alluded to in a preceding volume. Burns, like most poets, inherited with his genius constitutional hypochondriasm, and this showed itself at a very early period, and clouded his mind with many gloomy presentiments of the future, in his case too truly fulfilled. In the scanty praise bestowed generally on the poet's correspondence by the Edinburgh Reviewer, the above letter comes in for a special notice, and, we think, with great justice. "One of the most striking letters in the Collection," (Cromek's Reliques of Burns,) says Mr Jeffrey, "and to us, one of the most interesting, is the earliest of the whole series; being addressed to his father in 1781, six or seven years before his name had been heard out of his own family. The author was then a common flaxdresser, and his father a poor peasant;—yet there is not one trait of vulgarity, either in the thought or expression; but on the contrary, a dignity and elevation of sentiment, which must have been considered as of good omen in a youth of much higher condition."

"This letter," says Dr Currie, "written several years before the publication of his poems, when his name was as obscure as his condition was humble, displays the philosophic melancholy which so generally forms the poetical temperament, and that buoyant and ambitious spirit, which indicates a mind conscious of its strength. At Irvine, Burns at this time possessed a single room for his lodgings, rented perhaps at the rate of a shilling a-week. He passed his days in constant labour, as a flaxdresser, and his food consisted chiefly of oatmeal, sent to him from his father's family. The store of this humble though wholesome nutriment, it appears, was nearly exhausted, and he was about to borrow till he should obtain a supply. Yet even in this situation his active imagination had formed to itself pictures of eminence and distinction. His despair of making a figure in the world, shows how ardently he wished for honourable fame;

choose to be absent on that account, as well as for some other little reasons which I shall tell you at meeting. My health is nearly the same as when you were here, only my sleep is a little sounder, and on the whole I am rather better than otherwise, though I mend by very slow degrees. The weakness of my nerves has so debilitated my mind, that I dare neither review past wants, nor look forward into futurity; for the least anxiety or perturbation in my breast produces most unhappy effects on my whole frame. Sometimes, indeed, when for an hour or two my spirits are a little lightened, I glimmer a little into futurity; but my principal, and indeed my only pleasurable employment is looking backwards and forwards in a moral and religious way; I am quite transported at the thought, that ere long, perhaps very soon, I shall bid an eternal adieu to all the pains, and uneasiness, and disquietudes of this weary life; for I assure you I am heartily tired of it; and if I do not very much deceive myself, I could contentedly and gladly resign it.

> "The soul, uneasy, and confined at home,
> Rests and expatiates in a life to come."

It is for this reason I am more pleased with the 15th, 16th, and 17th verses of the 7th chapter of Revelation, than with any ten times as many verses in the whole Bible, and would not exchange the noble enthusiasm with which they inspire me for all that this world has to offer. As for this world, I despair of ever making a figure in it. I am not formed for the bustle of the busy, nor the flutter of the gay. I shall never again be capable of entering into such scenes. Indeed I am altogether unconcerned at the thoughts of this life. I foresee that poverty and obscurity probably await me, and I am in some measure prepared, and daily

and his contempt of life, founded on this despair, is the genuine expression of a youthful and generous mind. In such a state of reflection and of suffering, the imagination of Burns naturally passed the dark boundaries of our earthly horizon, and rested on those beautiful creations of a better world, where there is neither thirst, nor hunger, nor sorrow, and where happiness shall be in proportion to the capacity of happiness."—M.

preparing to meet them. I have but just time and paper to return you my grateful thanks for the lessons of virtue and piety you have given me, which were too much neglected at the time of giving them, but which I hope have been remembered ere it is yet too late. Present my dutiful respects to my mother, and my compliments to Mr and Mrs Muir; and with wishing you a merry New-Year's day I shall conclude. I am, honoured sir, your dutiful son,

ROBERT BURNESS.

P. S. My meal is nearly out, but I am going to borrow till I get more.

No. II.

TO MR JOHN MURDOCH, SCHOOLMASTER,

STAPLES INN BUILDINGS, LONDON.*

LOCHLEA, 15*th January*, 1783.

DEAR SIR,

As I have an opportunity of sending you a letter without putting you to that expense, which any production of

* As exhibiting the progress of the Poet's studies, as well as the names of his favourite authors, this letter, addressed to his old teacher at Lochlea, Mr Murdoch, is very interesting, and affords us an insight into the origin of part of that sentimentalism and exaggeration of feeling which are occasionally perceptible, both in his prose and poetical works. After this confession, it is no marvel to us, that the muse of Coila, when she presented herself to the imaginings of her only and choicest son, when sitting "lanely by the ingle cheek," had "a hair-brained sentimental trace strongly marked in her face." Burns, at this period, however, had a full consciousness of his own innate powers, and the pride of genius breaks out in almost every line. The glorious triumph does indeed swell his heart, and in his confidential letter to his early preceptor, he makes no attempt to conceal it. Mr Murdoch, Allan Cunningham informs us, lived to a good old age, and died in London several years ago, respected, but poor.—M.

mine would but ill repay, I embrace it with pleasure, to tell you that I have not forgotten, nor ever will forget, the many obligations I lie under to your kindness and friendship.

I do not doubt, Sir, but you will wish to know what has been the result of all the pains of an indulgent father, and a masterly teacher; and I wish I could gratify your curiosity with such a recital as you would be pleased with; but that is what I am afraid will not be the case. I have, indeed, kept pretty clear of vicious habits; and, in this respect, I hope, my conduct will not disgrace the education I have gotten; but, as a man of the world, I am most miserably deficient. One would have thought that, bred as I have been, under a father, who has figured pretty well as *un homme des affaires*, I might have been, what the world calls, a pushing, active fellow; but to tell you the truth, Sir, there is hardly any thing more my reverse. I seem to be one sent into the world, to see and observe; and I very easily compound with the knave who tricks me of my money, if there be any thing original about him, which shows me human nature in a different light from any thing I have seen before. In short, the joy of my heart is to "study men, their manners, and their ways;" and for this darling subject, I cheerfully sacrifice every other consideration. I am quite indolent about those great concerns that set the bustling, busy sons of care agog; and if I have to answer for the present hour, I am very easy with regard to any thing further. Even the last, worst shift of the unfortunate and the wretched does not much terrify me: I know that even then, my talent for what country folks call "a sensible crack," when once it is sanctified by a hoary head, would procure me so much esteem, that even then—I would learn to be happy.* However, I am under no apprehensions about that; for though indolent, yet so far as

* The last shift alluded to here must be the condition of an itinerant beggar.

an extremely delicate constitution permits, I am not lazy; and in many things, especially in tavern matters, I am a strict economist; not, indeed, for the sake of the money; but one of the principal parts in my composition is a kind of pride of stomach; and I scorn to fear the face of any man living: above every thing, I abhor as hell, the idea of sneaking in a corner to avoid a dun—possibly some pitiful, sordid wretch, who in my heart I despise and detest. 'Tis this, and this alone, that endears economy to me. In the matter of books, indeed, I am very profuse. My favourite authors are of the sentimental kind, such as Shenstone, particularly his "Elegies;" Thomson; "Man of Feeling" —a book I prize next to the Bible; "Man of the World;" Sterne, especially his "Sentimental Journey;" Macpherson's "Ossian," &c.; these are the glorious models after which I endeavour to form my conduct, and 'tis incongruous, 'tis absurd to suppose that the man whose mind glows with sentiments lighted up at their sacred flame—the man whose heart distends with benevolence to all the human race—he "who can soar above this little scene of things"—can he descend to mind the paltry concerns about which the terræfilial race fret, and fume, and vex themselves! O how the glorious triumph swells my heart! I forget that I am a poor, insignificant devil, unnoticed and unknown, stalking up and down fairs and markets, when I happen to be in them, reading a page or two of mankind, and "catching the manners living as they rise," whilst the men of business jostle me on every side, as an idle incumbrance in their way.—But I dare say I have by this time tired your patience; so I shall conclude with begging you to give Mrs Murdoch—not my compliments, for that is a mere commonplace story; but my warmest, kindest wishes for her welfare; and accept of the same for yourself, from,

Dear Sir, yours.—R. B.

No. III.

TO MR JAMES BURNESS,

WRITER, MONTROSE.*

LOCHLEA, 21*st June*, 1783.

DEAR SIR,

MY father received your favour of the 10th current, and as he has been for some months very poorly in health, and is in his own opinion (and, indeed, in almost every body's

* This gentleman (the son of an elder brother of my father's), when he was very young, lost his father, and having discovered in his father's repositories some of my father's letters, he requested that the correspondence might be renewed. My father continued till the last year of his life to correspond with his nephew, and it was afterwards kept up by my brother. Extracts from some of my brother's letter's to his cousin, are introduced in this edition for the purpose of exhibiting the Poet before he had attracted the notice of the public, and in his domestic family relations afterwards.—*Gilbert Burns.*

We are informed by Mr Cunningham, in his recent edition of Burns' works, that "James Burness, son of the Poet's uncle, lives at Montrose, and has seen fame come to his house in a two-fold way; viz. through his eminent cousin Robert, and dearer still, through his own grandson, Lieutenant Burnes, with whose talents and intrepidity the world is well acquainted. He is now, as may be surmised, says our authority, descending into the vale of years; his faculties are still unimpared, and his love of his own ancient name nothing lessened. He adheres—and we honour him for it—to the spelling of his ancestors; and is not at all pleased at the change made in the name, and even sighs, it is said, because his grandsons have adopted, in part, the Poet's modification." It is a hateful affectation this of altering the ancient spelling of either surname or place, but it is one very common, and one which is calculated to breed inextricable confusion, in tracing family history, or ascertaining with precision, localities. The letter before us exhibits Burns in the character of a man of business, and we humbly think he writes upon the evils of paper currency, the depression of trade, and the decay of the agricultural interests, with the best political economist of the present day. He has generally been supposed to be a very indifferent farmer, but the following compliment paid to his observation in dairy matters, by no incompetent judge, we think right to insert.

else) in a dying condition, he has only, with great difficulty, written a few farewell lines to each of his brothers-in-law. For this melancholy reason, I now hold the pen for him to thank you for your kind letter, and to assure you, Sir, that it shall not be my fault if my father's correspondence in the north die with him. My brother writes to John Caird, and to him I must refer you for the news of our family.

I shall only trouble you with a few particulars relative to the wretched state of this country. Our markets are exceedingly high; oatmeal, 17*d.* and 18*d.* per peck, and not to be got even at that price. We have indeed been pretty well supplied with quantities of white pease from England and elsewhere, but that resource is likely to fail us, and what will become of us then, particularly the very poorest sort, Heaven only knows. This country, till of late, was flourishing incredibly in the manufacture of silk, lawn, and carpet-weaving; and we are still carrying on a good deal in that way, but much reduced from what it was. We had also a fine trade in the shoe way, but now entirely ruined, and hundreds driven to a starving condition on account of it. Farming is also at a very low ebb with us. Our lands, generally speaking, are mountainous and barren; and our landholders, full of ideas of farming gathered from the English and the Lothians, and other rich soils in Scotland, make no allowance for the odds of the quality of land, and consequently stretch us much beyond what in the event we will be found able to pay. We are also much at a loss for

In a note to a General View of the Agriculture of the County of Ayr, by Colonel Fullarton, of Fullarton, drawn up for the consideration of the Board of Agriculture, and internal improvement, and published at Edinburgh, 1793, the author says at p. 58. "In order to prevent the danger arising from horned cattle in studs and straw yards, the best mode is to cut out the budding knob, or root of the horn, while the calf is very young. This was suggested to me by Mr Robert Burns, whose general talents are no less conspicuous, than the poetic powers which have done so much honour to the county where he was born."—M.

want of proper methods in our improvements of farming. Necessity compels us to leave our old schemes, and few of us have opportunities of being well informed in new ones. In short, my dear Sir, since the unfortunate beginning of this American war, and its as unfortunate conclusion, this country has been, and still is, decaying very fast. Even in higher life, a couple of our Ayrshire noblemen, and the major part of our knights and squires are all insolvent. A miserable job of a Douglas, Heron, and Co.'s bank, which no doubt you heard of, has undone numbers of them; and imitating English and French, and other foreign luxuries and fopperies, has ruined as many more. There is a great trade of smuggling carried on along our coasts, which, however destructive to the interests of the kingdom at large, certainly enriches this corner of it, but too often at the expense of our morals. However, it enables individuals to make, at least for a time, a splendid appearance: but Fortune, as is usual with her when she is uncommonly lavish of her favours, is generally even with them at the last; and happy were it for numbers of them if she would leave them no worse than when she found them.

My mother sends you a small present of a cheese, 'tis but a very little one, as our last year's stock is sold off; but if you could fix on any correspondent in Edinburgh or Glasgow, we would send you a proper one in the season. Mrs Black promises to take the cheese under her care so far, and then to send it to you by the Stirling carrier.

I shall conclude this long letter with assuring you that I shall be very happy to hear from you, or any of our friends in your country, when opportunity serves.

My father sends you, probably for the last time in this world, his warmest wishes for your welfare and happiness; and my mother and the rest of the family desire to inclose their kind compliments to you, Mrs Burness, and the rest of your family, along with those of,

Dear Sir,

Your Affectionate Cousin,—R. B.

No. IV.

TO MISS E.*

LOCHLEA, 1783.

I VERILY believe, my dear E., that the pure genuine feelings of love are as rare in the world as the pure genuine principles of virtue and piety. This I hope will account for the uncommon style of all my letters to you. By uncommon, I mean their being written in such a hasty manner, which, to tell you the truth, has made me often afraid lest you should take me for some zealous bigot, who conversed with his mistress as he would converse with his minister. I don't know how it is, my dear, for though, except your company, there is nothing on earth gives me so much pleasure as writing to you, yet it never gives me those giddy raptures so much talked of among lovers. I have often thought that if a well-grounded affection be not really a part of virtue, 'tis something extremely akin to it. Whenever the thought of my E. warms my heart, every feeling of humanity, every principle of generosity kindles in my breast. It extinguishes every dirty spark of malice and envy which are but too apt to infest me. I grasp every creature in the arms of universal benevolence, and equally participate in the pleasures of the happy, and sympathize with the miseries of the unfortunate. I assure you, my dear, I often look up to the Divine Disposer of events with an eye of gratitude for the blessing which I hope he intends

* This and the three following letters appeared in Dr Currie's first edition of the Poet's posthumous works, but in subsequent editions were suppressed, to make room for what the editor conceived more important matter. The name of the lady to whom they were addressed, and who was also the heroine of several of the Poet's best lyrics, has not transpired. Burns in these letters moralizes occasionally very happily on love and marriage. They are in fact the only sensible love letters we have ever seen, yet they have an air of task-work and constraint about them that is far from natural.—M.

to bestow on me in bestowing you. I sincerely wish that he may bless my endeavours to make your life as comfortable and happy as possible, both in sweetening the rougher parts of my natural temper, and bettering the unkindly circumstances of my fortune. This, my dear, is a passion, at least in my view, worthy of a man, and I will add worthy of a Christian. The sordid earth-worm may profess love to a woman's person, whilst in reality his affection is centered in her pocket; and the slavish drudge may go a-wooing as he goes to the horse-market to choose one who is stout and firm, and, as we may say of an old horse, one who will be a good drudge and draw kindly. I disdain their dirty, puny ideas. I would be heartily out of humour with myself, if I thought I were capable of having so poor a notion of the sex, which were designed to crown the pleasures of society. Poor devils! I don't envy them their happiness who have such notions. For my part I propose quite other pleasures with my dear partner.—R. B.

No. V.

TO THE SAME.

LOCHLEA, 1783.

MY DEAR E.:

I DO not remember, in the course of your acquaintance and mine, ever to have heard your opinion on the ordinary way of falling in love, amongst people of our station in life: I do not mean the persons who proceed in the way of bargain, but those whose affection is really placed on the person.

Though I be, as you know very well, but a very awkward lover myself, yet as I have some opportunities of observing the conduct of others who are much better skilled in the affair of courtship than I am, I often think it is owing to

lucky chance more than to good management, that there are not more unhappy marriages than usually are.

It is natural for a young fellow to like the acquaintance of the females, and customary for him to keep them company when occasion serves: some one of them is more agreeable to him than the rest; there is something, he knows not what, pleases him, he knows not how, in her company. This I take to be what is called love with the greater part of us; and I must own, my dear E., it is a hard game such a one as you have to play when you meet with such a lover You cannot refuse but he is sincere, and yet though you use him ever so favourably, perhaps in a few months, or at farthest in a year or two, the same unaccountable fancy may make him as distractedly fond of another, whilst you are quite forgot. I am aware that perhaps the next time I have the pleasure of seeing you, you may bid me take my own lesson home, and tell me that the passion I have professed for you is perhaps one of those transient flashes I have been describing; but I hope, my dear E., you will do me the justice to believe me, when I assure you that the love I have for you is founded on the sacred principles of virtue and honour, and by consequence so long as you continue possessed of those amiable qualities which first inspired my passion for you, so long must I continue to love you. Believe me, my dear, it is love like this alone which can render the marriage state happy. People may talk of flames and raptures as long as they please, and a warm fancy, with a flow of youthful spirits, may make them feel something like what they describe; but sure I am the nobler faculties of the mind, with kindred feelings of the heart, can only be the foundation of friendship, and it has always been my opinion that the married life was only friendship in a more exalted degree. If you will be so good as to grant my wishes, and it should please Providence to spare us to the latest period of life, I can look forward and see that even then, though bent down with wrinkled age; even then, when all other worldly circumstances will be indif-

ferent to me, I will regard my E. with the tenderest affection, and for this plain reason, because she is still possessed of those noble qualities, improved to a much higher degree, which first inspired my affection for her.

> "O! happy state when souls each other draw,
> When love is liberty, and nature law."

I know were I to speak in such a style to many a girl, who thinks herself possessed of no small share of sense, she would think it ridiculous; but the language of the heart is, my dear E., the only courtship I shall ever use to you.

When I look over what I have written, I am sensible it is vastly different from the ordinary style of courtship, but I shall make no apology—I know your good nature will excuse what your good sense may see amiss.

R. B.

No. VI.

TO THE SAME.

LOCHLEA, 1783.

I HAVE often thought it a peculiarly unlucky circumstance in love, that though, in every other situation in life, telling the truth is not only the safest, but actually by far the easiest way of proceeding, a lover is never under greater difficulty in acting, or more puzzled for expression, than when his passion is sincere, and his intentions are honourable. I do not think that it is very difficult for a person of ordinary capacity to talk of love and fondness, which are not felt, and to make vows of constancy and fidelity, which are never intended to be performed, if he be villain enough to practise such detestable conduct: but to a man whose heart glows with the principles of integrity and truth, and who sincerely loves a woman of amiable person, uncommon refinement of sentiment and purity of manners—

to such a one, in such circumstances, I can assure you, my dear, from my own feelings at this present moment, courtship is a task indeed. There is such a number of foreboding fears, and distrustful anxieties crowd into my mind when I am in your company, or when I sit down to write to you, that what to speak or what to write I am altogether at a loss.

There is one rule which I have hitherto practised, and which I shall invariably keep with you, and that is, honestly to tell you the plain truth. There is something so mean and unmanly in the arts of dissimulation and falsehood, that I am surprised they can be acted by any one in so noble, so generous a passion, as virtuous love. No, my dear E., I shall never endeavour to gain your favour by such detestable practices. If you will be so good and so generous as to admit me for your partner, your companion, your bosom friend through life, there is nothing on this side of eternity shall give me greater transport; but I shall never think of purchasing your hand by any arts unworthy of a man, and I will add, of a Christian. There is one thing, my dear, which I earnestly request of you, and it is this; that you would soon either put an end to my hopes by a peremptory refusal, or cure me of my fears by a generous consent.

It would oblige me much if you would send me a line or two when convenient. I shall only add further, that, if a behaviour regulated (though perhaps but very imperfectly) by the rules of honour and virtue, if a heart devoted to love and esteem you, and an earnest endeavour to promote your happiness; if these are qualities you would wish in a friend, in a husband, I hope you shall ever find them in your real friend and sincere lover,

R. B.

No. VII.

TO THE SAME.

LOCHLEA, 1783.

I OUGHT, in good manners, to have acknowledged the receipt of your letter before this time, but my heart was so shocked with the contents of it, that I can scarcely yet collect my thoughts so as to write you on the subject. I will not attempt to describe what I felt on receiving your letter. I read it over and over, again and again, and though it was in the politest language of refusal, still it was peremptory; "you were sorry you could not make me a return, but you wish me," what, without you, I never can obtain, "you wish me all kind of happiness." It would be weak and unmanly to say that, without you I never can be happy; but sure I am, that sharing life with you would have given it a relish, that, wanting you, I can never taste.

Your uncommon personal advantages, and your superior good sense, do not so much strike me; these, possibly, may be met with in a few instances in others; but that amiable goodness, that tender feminine softness, that endearing sweetness of disposition, with all the charming offspring of a warm feeling heart—these I never again expect to meet with, in such a degree, in this world. All these charming qualities, heightened by an education much beyond any thing I have ever met in any woman I ever dared to approach, have made an impression on my heart that I do not think the world can ever efface. My imagination has fondly flattered myself with a wish, I dare not say it ever reached a hope, that possibly I might one day call you mine. I had formed the most delightful images, and my fancy fondly brooded over them; but now I am wretched for the loss of what I really had no right to expect. I must now think no more of you as a mistress; still I presume to ask to be admitted as a friend. As such

I wish to be allowed to wait on you, and as I expect to remove in a few days a little further off, and you, I suppose, will soon leave this place, I wish to see or hear from you soon; and if an expression should perhaps escape me, rather too warm for friendship, I hope you will pardon it in, my dear Miss—(pardon me the dear expression for once) * * * *

R. B.

No. VIII.

TO ROBERT RIDDEL, Esq.

My dear Sir,

On rummaging over some old papers I lighted on a MS. of my early years, in which I had determined to write myself out; as I was placed by fortune among a class of men to whom my ideas would have been nonsense. I had meant that the book should have lain by me, in the fond hope, that some time or other, even after I was no more, my thoughts would fall into the hands of somebody capable of appreciating their value. It sets off thus:—

"Observations, Hints, Songs, Scraps of Poetry, &c. by Robert Burness; a man who had little art in making money, and still less in keeping it; but was, however, a man of some sense, a great deal of honesty, and unbounded good-will to every creature, rational and irrational.—As he was but little indebted to scholastic education, and bred at a plough-tail, his performances must be strongly tinctured with his unpolished, rustic way of life; but as I believe they are really his own, it may be some entertainment to a curious observer of human nature to see how a ploughman thinks, and feels, under the pressure of love, ambition, anxiety, grief, with the like cares and passions, which, however diversified by the modes and manners of life, operate pretty much alike, I believe, on all the species."

"There are numbers in the world who do not want sense to make a figure, so much as an opinion of their own abilities to put them upon recording their observations, and allowing them the same importance which they do to those which appear in print."—*Shenstone.*

"Pleasing, when youth is long expired, to trace
The forms our pencil, or our pen designed!
Such was our youthful air, and shape, and face,
Such the soft image of our youthful mind."—*Ibid.*

April, 1783.

Notwithstanding all that has been said against love, respecting the folly and weakness it leads a young inexperienced mind into; still I think it in a great measure deserves the highest encomiums that have been passed upon it. If any thing on earth deserves the name of rapture or transport, it is the feelings of green eighteen in the company of the mistress of his heart, when she repays him with an equal return of affection.

August.

There is certainly some connexion between love and music, and poetry; and, therefore, I have always thought it a fine touch of nature, that passage in a modern love-composition:—

"As towards her cot he jogg'd along,
Her name was frequent in his song."

For my own part I never had the least thought or inclination of turning poet till I got once heartily in love, and then rhyme and song were, in a manner, the spontaneous language of my heart. The following composition was the first of my performances, and done at an early period of life, when my heart glowed with honest warm simplicity; unacquainted and uncorrupted with the ways of a wicked world. The performance is, indeed, very puerile and silly;

but I am always pleased with it, as it recalls to my mind those happy days when my heart was yet honest, and my tongue was sincere. The subject of it was a young girl who really deserved all the praises I have bestowed on her. I not only had this opinion of her then—but I actually think so still, now that the spell is long since broken, and the enchantment at an end.

Tune—"I am a man unmarried."

O once I lov'd a bonnie lass,
Ay, and I love her still,
And whilst that honour warms my breast
I'll love my handsome Nell.
Fal lal de ral, &c.

As bonnie lasses I hae seen,
And mony full as braw,
But for a modest gracefu' mien
The like I never saw.

A bonnie lass, I will confess,
Is pleasant to the e'e,
But without some better qualities
She's no a lass for me.

But Nelly's looks are blythe and sweet,
And what is best of a',
Her reputation is complete,
And fair without a flaw.

She dresses aye sae clean and neat,
Both decent and genteel:
And then there's something in her gait
Gars ony dress look weel.

A gaudy dress and gentle air
May slightly touch the heart,

But it's innocence and modesty
That polishes the dart.

'Tis this in Nelly pleases me,
'Tis this enchants my soul;
For absolutely in my breast
She reigns without control.
Fal lal de ral, &c

Lest my works should be thought below criticism; or meet with a critic who, perhaps, will not look on them with so candid and favourable an eye; I am determined to criticise them myself.

The first distich of the first stanza is quite too much in the flimsy strain of our ordinary street ballads; and, on the other hand, the second distich is too much in the other extreme. The expression is a little awkward, and the sentiment too serious. Stanza the second I am well pleased with; and I think it conveys a fine idea of that amiable part of the sex—the agreeables: or what in our Scotch dialect we call a sweet sonsy lass. The third stanza has a little of the flimsy turn in it: and the third line has rather too serious a cast. The fourth stanza is a very indifferent one; the first line is, indeed, all in the strain of the second stanza, but the rest is mere expletive. The thoughts in the fifth stanza come finely up to my favourite idea—a sweet sonsy lass: the last line, however, halts a little. The same sentiments are kept up with equal spirit and tenderness in the sixth stanza: but the second and fourth lines ending with short syllables hurt the whole. The seventh stanza has several minute faults; but I remember I composed it in a wild enthusiasm of passion, and to this hour I never recollect it but my heart melts, my blood sallies, at the remembrance.

September.

I entirely agree with that judicious philosopher, Mr Smith, in his excellent Theory of Moral Sentiments, that

remorse is the most painful sentiment that can imbitter the human bosom. Any ordinary pitch of fortitude may bear up tolerably well under those calamities, in the procurement of which we ourselves have had no hand; but when our own follies, or crimes, have made us miserable and wretched, to bear up with manly firmness, and at the same time have a proper penitential sense of our misconduct, is a glorious effort of self-command.

"Of all the numerous ills that hurt our peace,
That press the soul, or wring the mind with anguish,
Beyond comparison the worst are those
That to our folly or our guilt we owe.
In every other circumstance, the mind
Has this to say—'It was no deed of mine;'
But when to all the evil of misfortune
This sting is added—'Blame thy foolish self!'
Or worser far, the pangs of keen remorse;
The torturing, gnawing, consciousness of guilt—
Of guilt, perhaps, where we've involved others;
The young, the innocent, who fondly lov'd us,
Nay, more, that very love their cause of ruin!
O burning hell! in all thy store of torments,
There's not a keener lash!
Lives there a man so firm, who, while his heart
Feels all the bitter horrors of his crime,
Can reason down its agonizing throbs;
And, after proper purpose of amendment,
Can firmly force his jarring thoughts to peace?
O, happy! happy! enviable man!
O glorious magnanimity of soul!"*

March, 1784.

I have often observed, in the course of my experience of human life, that every man, even the worst, has something good about him; though very often nothing else than a happy temperament of constitution inclining him to this or that virtue. For this reason, no man can say in what

* This is one strong instance among many, how hardly Burns in his youth struggled against his besetting sin, and what grief and misery the indulgence cost him.—H.

degree any other person, besides himself, can be, with strict justice, called wicked. Let any of the strictest character for regularity of conduct among us, examine impartially how many vices he has never been guilty of, not from any care or vigilance, but for want of opportunity, or some accidental circumstance intervening; how many of the weaknesses of mankind he has escaped, because he was out of the line of such temptation; and, what often, if not always, weighs more than all the rest, how much he is indebted to the world's good opinion, because the world does not know all: I say, any man who can thus think, will scan the failings, nay, the faults and crimes, of mankind around him, with a brother's eye.

I have often courted the acquaintance of that part of mankind, commonly known by the ordinary phrase of blackguards, sometimes farther than was consistent with the safety of my character; those who, by thoughtless prodigality or headstrong passions, have been driven to ruin. Though disgraced by follies, nay, sometimes stained with guilt, I have yet found among them, in not a few instances, some of the noblest virtues, magnanimity, generosity, disinterested friendship, and even modesty.

April.

As I am what the men of the world, if they knew such a man, would call a whimsical mortal, I have various sources of pleasure and enjoyment, which are, in a manner, peculiar to myself, or some here and there such other out-of-the way person. Such is the peculiar pleasure I take in the season of winter, more than the rest of the year. This, I believe may be partly owing to my misfortunes giving my mind a melancholy cast: but there is something even in the—

> "Mighty tempest, and the hoary waste,
> Abrupt and deep, stretch'd o'er the buried earth,"—

which raises the mind to a serious sublimity, favourable to

every thing great and noble. There is scarcely any earthly object gives me more—I do not know if I should call it pleasure—but something which exalts me, something which enraptures me—than to walk in the sheltered side of a wood, or high plantation, in a cloudy winter-day, and hear the stormy wind howling among the trees, and raving over the plain. It is my best season for devotion: my mind is wrapt up in a kind of enthusiasm to Him, who, in the pompous language of the Hebrew bard, "walks on the wings of the wind." In one of these seasons, just after a train of misfortunes, I composed the following:—

The wintry west extends his blast.*

Shenstone finely observes, that love-verses, writ without any real passion, are the most nauseous of all conceits; and I have often thought that no man can be a proper critic of love-composition, except he himself, in one or more instances, have been a warm votary of this passion. As I have been all along a miserable dupe to love, and have been led into a thousand weaknesses and follies by it, for that reason I put the more confidence in my critical skill, in distinguishing foppery and conceit from real passion and nature. Whether the following song will stand the test, I will not pretend to say, because it is my own; only I can say it was, at the time, genuine from the heart:—

Behind yon hills where Lugar flows. †

March, 1784.

There was a certain period of my life that my spirit was broke by repeated losses and disasters, which threatened, and indeed effected, the utter ruin of my fortune. My body, too, was attacked by that most dreadful distemper, a

* Vol. I. p. 238. † Vol. II. p. 94.

hypochondria, or confirmed melancholy. In this wretched state, the recollection of which makes me yet shudder, I hung my harp on the willow trees, except in some lucid intervals, in one of which I composed the following:—

O thou Great Being! what thou art.*

April.

The following song is a wild rhapsody, miserably deficient in versification; but as the sentiments are the genuine feelings of my heart, for that reason I have a particular pleasure in conning it over.

Tune—"The Weaver and his Shuttle, O."

My father was a farmer
Upon the Carrick border, O,
And carefully he bred me
In decency and order, O;
He bade me act a manly part,
Though I had ne'er a farthing, O,
For without an honest manly heart
No man was worth regarding, O.

Then out into the world
My course I did determine, O,
Tho' to be rich was not my wish,
Yet to be great was charming, O:
My talents they were not the worst,
Nor yet my education, O;
Resolv'd was I, at least to try,
To mend my situation, O.

In many a way, and vain essay,
I courted fortune's favour, O,

* Vol. I. p. 32.

Some cause unseen still stept between
To frustrate each endeavour, O;
Sometimes by foes I was o'erpower'd,
Sometimes by friends forsaken, O,
And when my hope was at the top,
I still was worst mistaken, O.

Then sore harass'd, and tir'd at last,
With fortune's vain delusion, O,
I dropt my schemes, like idle dreams,
And came to this conclusion, O;
The past was bad, and the future hid;
Its good or ill untried, O,
But the present hour was in my pow'r,
And so I would enjoy it, O.

No help, nor hope, nor view had I,
Nor person to befriend me, O;
So I must toil, and sweat and broil,
And labour to sustain me, O.
To plough and sow, to reap and mow,
My father bred me early, O,
For one, he said, to labour bred,
Was a match for fortune fairly, O,

Thus all obscure, unknown, and poor,
Thro' life I'm doom'd to wander, O,
Till down my weary bones I lay
In everlasting slumber, O:
No view nor care, but shun whate'er
Might breed me pain or sorrow, O,
I live to-day as well's I may,
Regardless of to-morrow, O.

But cheerful still, I am as well,
As a monarch in a palace, O,
Tho' fortune's frown still hunts me down,
With all her wonted malice, O.

I make, indeed, my daily bread,
But ne'er can make it farther, O;
But as daily bread is all I need,
I do not much regard her, O.

When sometimes, by my labour,
I earn a little money, O,
Some unforeseen misfortune
Comes generally upon me, O;
Mischance, mistake, or by neglect,
Or my good-natur'd folly, O,
But come what will, I've sworn it still,
I'll ne'er be melancholy, O.

All you who follow wealth and power
With unremitting ardour, O,
The more in this you look for bliss,
You leave your view the farther, O;
Had you the wealth Potosi boasts,
Or nations to adore you, O,
A cheerful honest-hearted clown
I will prefer before you, O.

April.

I think the whole species of young men may be naturally enough divided into two grand classes, which I shall call the *grave* and the *merry*; though, by the bye, these terms do not with propriety enough express my ideas. The grave I shall cast into the usual division of those who are goaded on by the love of money, and those whose darling wish is to make a figure in the world. The merry are the men of pleasure of all denominations; the jovial lads, who have too much fire and spirit to have any settled rule of action; but, without much deliberation, follow the strong impulses of nature: the thoughtless, the careless, the indolent—in particular *he* who, with a happy sweetness of natural temper and a cheerful vacancy of thought, steals through life—generally, indeed, in poverty and obscurity; but poverty and obscurity are

only evils to him who can sit gravely down and make a repining comparison between his own situation and that of others; and lastly, to grace the quorum, such are, generally, those whose heads are capable of all the towerings of genius, and whose hearts are warmed with all the delicacy of feeling

---

August.

The foregoing was to have been an elaborate dissertation on the various species of men; but as I cannot please myself in the arrangement of my ideas, I must wait till farther experience and nicer observation throw more light on the subject.—In the mean time I shall set down the following fragment, which, as it is the genuine language of my heart, will enable any body to determine which of the classes I belong to:—

There's nought but care on ev'ry han',
In ev'ry hour that passes, O.*

As the grand end of human life is to cultivate an intercourse with that BEING to whom we owe life, with every enjoyment that renders life delightful; and to maintain an integritive conduct towards our fellow-creatures; that so by forming piety and virtue into habit, we may be fit members for that society of the pious and the good, which reason and revelation teach us to expect beyond the grave, I do not see that the turn of mind, and pursuits of such a one as the above verses describe—one who spends the hours and thoughts which the vocations of the day can spare with Ossian, Shakspeare, Thomson, Shenstone, Sterne, &c.; or, as the maggot takes him, a gun, a fiddle, or a song to make or mend; and at all times some heart's-dear bonnie lass in view—I say I do not see that the turn of mind and pursuits of such an one are in the least more inimical to the sacred interests of piety and virtue, than the even lawful, bustling and strain-

* Vol. II. p. 97.

ing after the world's riches and honours : and I do not see but he may gain heaven as well—which, by the bye, is no mean consideration—who steals through the vale of life, amusing himself with every little flower that fortune throws in his way, as he, who, straining straight forward, and perhaps spattering all about him, gains some of life's little eminences, where, after all, he can only see and be seen a little more conspicuously than what, in the pride of his heart, he is apt to term the poor, indolent devil he has left behind him.

August.

A Prayer, when fainting fits, and other alarming symptoms of a pleurisy or some other dangerous disorder, which indeed still threatens me, first put nature on the alarm :—

O thou unknown, Almighty cause
Of all my hope and fear!*

EGOTISMS FROM MY OWN SENSATIONS.

May.

I don't well know what is the reason of it, but some how or other, though I am, when I have a mind, pretty generally beloved, yet, I never could get the art of commanding respect.† I imagine it is owing to my being deficient in what

* Vol. I. p. 143.

† Cromek on this passage remarks,—"There is no doubt that if Burns at any time really laboured under this infirmity, he was successful in inquiring into its causes, and also in his efforts to amend it. When he was, at a later period of life, introduced into the superior circles of society, he did not appear then as a cypher, nor did he, by any violation of the dictates of common sense, give any occasion, even to those who were superciliously disposed to look upon him with contempt. On the contrary, he was conscious of his own moral and intellectual worth, and never abated an inch of his just claims to due consideration. The

Sterne calls "that understrapping virtue of discretion."—I am so apt to a *lapsus linguæ*, that I sometimes think the character of a certain great man I have read of somewhere is very much *apropos* to myself—that he was a compound of great talents and great folly.—N. B. To try if I can discover the causes of this wretched infirmity, and, if possible, to mend it.*

August.

However I am pleased with the works of our Scotch poets, particularly the excellent Ramsay, and the still more excellent Fergusson, yet I am hurt to see other places of Scotland, their towns, rivers, woods, haughs, &c. immortalized in such celebrated performances, while my dear native country, the ancient bailieries of Carrick, Kyle, and Cunningham, famous both in ancient and modern times for a gallant and warlike race of inhabitants; a country where civil, and particularly religious liberty have ever found their first support, and their last asylum; a country, the birthplace of many famous philosophers, soldiers, and statesmen,

following extract of a letter from his great and good biographer, who was an excellent judge of human character, bears an honourable testimony to the habitual firmness, decision, and independence of his mind, which constitute the only solid basis of respectability.

"'Burns was a very singular man in the strength and variety of his faculties.—I saw him, and once only, in the year 1792. We conversed together for about an hour in the street of Dumfries, and engaged in some very animated conversation. We differed in our sentiments sufficiently to be rather vehemently engaged—and this interview gave me a more lively as well as forcible impression of his talents than any part of his writings.—He was a great ORATOR,—an original and very versatile genius.'"—M.

3 *October*, 1799.

* At this place in the manuscript of the Poet are inserted the song, "Though cruel fate should bid us part;" the fragment, beginning, "One night as I did wander;" the song, "There was a lad was born in Kyle;" and the "Elegy on the death of Robert

and the scene of many important events recorded in Scottish history, particularly a great many of the actions of the glorious WALLACE, the SAVIOUR of his country; yet, we have never had one Scotch poet of any eminence, to make the fertile banks of Irvine, the romantic woodlands and sequestered scenes on Ayr, and the heathy mountainous source and winding sweep of DOON, emulate Tay, Forth, Ettrick, Tweed, &c. This is a complaint I would gladly remedy, but, alas! I am far unequal to the task, both in native genius and education. Obscure I am, and obscure I must be, though no young poet, nor young soldier's heart, ever beat more fondly for fame than mine—

> "And if there is no other scene of being
> Where my insatiate wish may have its fill,—
> This something at my heart that heaves for room,
> My best, my dearest part, was made in vain."

August.

A FRAGMENT.

Tune—"I had a horse, I had nae mair."

When first I came to Stewart Kyle,
My mind it was nae steady,
Where'er I gaed, where'er I rade
A mistress still I had aye.

But when I came roun' by Mauchline toun,
Not dreadin' any body,
My heart was caught before I thought,
And by a Mauchline lady.

Ruisseaux," a play on his own name: but as they are all inserted in a previous volume at length, it is needless to repeat them here. —M.

September.

There is a great irregularity in the old Scotch songs, a redundancy of syllables with respect to that exactness of accent and measure that the English poetry requires, but which glides in, most melodiously, with the respective tunes to which they are set. For instance, the fine old song of 'The Mill, Mill, O,' to give it a plain, prosaic reading, it halts prodigiously out of measure: on the other hand, the song set to the same tune in Bremner's collection of Scotch songs, which begins 'To Fanny fair could I impart,' &c. it is most exact measure, and yet, let them both be sung before a real critic, one above the biasses of prejudice, but a thorough judge of nature,—how flat and spiritless will the last appear, how trite, and lamely methodical, compared with the wild-warbling cadence, the heart-moving melody of the first!—This is particularly the case with all those airs which end with a hypermetrical syllable. There is a degree of wild irregularity in many of the compositions and fragments which are daily sung to them by my compeers, the common people—a certain happy arrangement of old Scotch syllables, and yet, very frequently, nothing, not even like rhyme, or sameness of jingle, at the ends of the lines. This has made me sometimes imagine that, perhaps it might be possible for a Scotch poet, with a nice judicious ear, to set compositions to many of our most favourite airs, particularly that class of them mentioned above, independent of rhyme altogether.

There is a noble sublimity, a heart-melting tenderness, in some of our ancient ballads, which show them to be the work of a masterly hand: and it has often given me many a heart-ache to reflect that such glorious old bards—bards who very probably owed all their talents to native genius, yet have described the exploits of heroes, the pangs of dis-

appointment, and the meltings of love, with such fine strokes of nature—that their very names (O how mortifying to a bard's vanity!) are now "buried among the wreck of things which were."

O ye illustrious names unknown! who could feel so strongly and describe so well: the last, the meanest of the muses' train—one who, though far inferior to your flights, yet eyes your path, and with trembling wing would sometimes soar after you—a poor rustic bard unknown, pays this sympathetic pang to your memory! Some of you tell us, with all the charms of verse, that you have been unfortunate in the world—unfortunate in love: he, too, has felt the loss of his little fortune, the loss of friends, and, worse than all, the loss of the woman he adored. Like you, all his consolation was his muse: she taught him in rustic measures to complain. Happy could he have done it with your strength of imagination and flow of verse! May the turf lie lightly on your bones! and may you now enjoy that solace and rest which this world rarely gives to the heart tuned to all the feelings of poesy and love!

Sept.

The following fragment is done* something in imitation of the manner of a noble old Scottish piece called M'Millan's Peggy, and sings to the tune of Galla Water.—My Montgomerie's Peggy was my deity for six or eight months. She had been bred (though as the world says, without any just pretence for it), in a style of life rather elegant—but as Vanburgh says in one of his comedies, My "damn'd star found me out" there too; for though I began the affair merely in a *gaieté de cœur*, or to tell the truth, which will scarcely be believed, a vanity of showing my parts in court-

* This passage explains the love-letters to Peggy, given in a preceding part of this volume, as well as justifies the slight criticism we passed upon them.—M.

ship, particularly my abilities at a *billet-doux*, which I always piqued myself upon, made me lay siege to her; and when, as I always do in my foolish gallantries, I had battered myself into a very warm affection for her, she told me, one day, in a flag of truce, that her fortress had been for some time before the rightful property of another; but, with the greatest friendship and politeness, she offered me every alliance except actual possession. I found out afterwards that what she told me of a pre-engagement was really true; but it cost me some heart-achs to get rid of the affair.

I have even tried to imitate, in this extempore thing, that irregularity in the rhyme, which, when judiciously done, has such a fine effect on the ear.—

FRAGMENT.

Tune—"Galla Water."

Altho' my bed were in yon muir,
Amang the heather, in my plaidie,
Yet happy, happy would I be
Had I my dear Montgomerie's Peggy.

When o'er the hill beat surly storms,
And winter nights were dark and rainy;
I'd seek some dell, and in my arms
I'd shelter dear Montgomerie's Peggy.

Were I a baron proud and high,
And horse and servants waiting ready,
Then a' 'twad gie o' joy to me,
The sharin't with Montgomery's Peggy.

September.

There is a fragment in imitation of an old Scotch song, well known among the country ingle sides. I cannot tell

the name, neither of the song nor the tune, but they are in fine unison with one another.—By the way, these old Scottish airs are so nobly sentimental, that when one would compose to them, to "south the tune," as our Scotch phrase is, over and over, is the readiest way to catch the inspiration, and raise the bard into that glorious enthusiasm so strongly characteristic of our old Scotch poetry. I shall here set down one verse of the piece mentioned above, both to mark the song and tune I mean, and likewise as a debt I owe to the author, as the repeating of that verse has lighted up my flame a thousand times :—

When clouds in skies do come together
To hide the brightness of the weather,
There will surely be some pleasant weather
When a' their storms are past and gone.*

Though fickle fortune has deceived me,
She promis'd fair and perform'd but ill;
Of mistress, friends, and wealth bereav'd me,
Yet I bear a heart shall support me still.

I'll act with prudence as far's I'm able,
But if success I must never find,
Then come misfortune, I bid thee welcome,
I'll meet thee with an undaunted mind.

The above was an extempore, under the pressure of a heavy train of misfortunes, which, indeed, threatened to undo me altogether. It was just at the close of that dreadful period mentioned p. viii.† and though the weather has brightened up a little with me, yet there has always been since a tempest brewing round me in the grim sky of

* Alluding to the misfortunes he feelingly laments before this verse. (This is the author's note.)

† Of the original MS.; see the remark, March, 1784, beginning, *There was a certain period*, &c.—M.

futurity, which I pretty plainly see will some time or other, perhaps ere long, overwhelm me, and drive me into some dolefull dell, to pine in solitary, squalid wretchedness. However, as I hope my poor country muse, who, all rustic, awkward, and unpolished as she is, has more charms for me than any other of the pleasures of life beside—as I hope she will not then desert me, I may even then learn to be, if not happy, at last easy, and *south a sang* to soothe my misery.

'Twas at the same time I set about composing an air in the old Scotch style.—I am not musical scholar enough to prick down my tune properly, so it can never see the light, and perhaps 'tis no great matter; but the following were the verses I composed to suit it:—

O raging fortune's withering blast
Has laid my leaf full low, O!
O raging fortune's withering blast,
Has laid my leaf full low! O.

My stem was fair, my bud was green,
My blossom sweet did blow; O,
The dew fell fresh, the sun rose mild,
And made my branches grow; O.

But luckless fortune's northern storms
Laid a' my blossoms low, O,
But luckless fortune's northern storms
Laid a' my blossoms low, O.

The tune consisted of three parts, so that the above verses just went through the whole air.

October, 1785.

If ever any young man, in the vestibule of the world, chance to throw his eye over these pages, let him pay a

warm attention to the following observations, as I assure him they are the fruit of a poor devil's dear-bought experience.—I have literally, like that great poet and great gallant, and by consequence, that great fool, Solomon, "turned my eyes to behold madness and folly." Nay, I have, with all the ardour of lively, fanciful, and whimsical imagination, accompanied with a warm, feeling, poetic heart, shaken hands with their intoxicating friendship.

In the first place, let my pupil, as he tenders his own peace, keep up a regular, warm intercourse with the Deity. R. B.*

No. IX.

TO MR JAMES BURNESS, MONTROSE.

LOCHLEA, 17*th Feb.* 1784.

DEAR COUSIN,

I WOULD have returned you my thanks for your kind favour of the 13th of December sooner, had it not been that I waited to give you an account of that melancholy event, which, for some time past, we have from day to day expected.

On the 13th current I lost the best of fathers. Though,

* Dr Currie, in his edition of the Poet's works, published only portions of this interesting commonplace, or scrap-book, which Burns had begun in April, 1783, and abruptly finished in October, 1785; but Mr Cromek, in his Reliques, very judiciously we think, though the critic in the Edinburgh Review thinks differently, presented the public with the whole of its contents. Speaking of the Reliques, the editor says, "It has been the chief object in making this collection, not to omit any thing which might illustrate the character and feelings of the Bard at different periods of his life. Hence these 'Observations' are given entire from his manuscript. A small portion appears in Dr Currie's edition; but the reader will pardon the repetition of it here, when he considers how much so valuable a paper would lose by being given in fragments."—M.

to be sure, we have had long warning of the impending stroke; still the feelings of nature claim their part, and I cannot recollect the tender endearments and parental lessons of the best of friends and ablest of instructors, without feeling what perhaps the calmer dictates of reason would partly condemn.

I hope my father's friends in your country will not let their connexion in this place die with him. For my part I shall ever with pleasure—with pride, acknowledge my connexion with those who were allied by the ties of blood and friendship to a man whose memory I shall ever honour and revere.

I expect, therefore, my dear Sir, you will not neglect any opportunity of letting me hear from you, which will very much oblige,

My dear Cousin, yours sincerely,

R. B.

No. X.

TO MR JAMES BURNESS, MONTROSE.

MOSSGIEL, *August*, 1784.

WE have been surprised with one of the most extraordinary phenomena in the moral world which, I dare say, has happened in the course of this half century. We have had a party of Presbytery relief, as they call themselves, for some time in this country. A pretty thriving society of them has been in the burgh of Irvine for some years past, till about two years ago a Mrs Buchan from Glasgow came among them, and began to spread some fanatical notions of religion among them, and, in a short time, made many converts; and, among others, their preacher, Mr Whyte, who, upon that account, has been suspended and formally deposed by his brethren. He continued, however, to preach in private to his party, and was supported, both he, and

their spiritual mother, as they affect to call old Buchan, by the contributions of the rest, several of whom were in good circumstances; till, in spring last, the populace rose and mobbed Mrs Buchan, and put her out of the town; on which, all her followers voluntarily quitted the place likewise, and with such precipitation, that many of them never shut their doors behind them; one left a washing on the green, another a cow bellowing at the crib without food, or any body to mind her, and after several stages, they are fixed at present in the neighbourhood of Dumfries. Their tenets are a strange jumble of enthusiastic jargon; among others, she pretends to give them the Holy Ghost by breathing on them, which she does with postures and practices that are scandalously indecent; they have likewise disposed of all their effects, and hold a community of goods, and live nearly an idle life, carrying on a great farce of pretended devotion in barns and woods, where they lodge and lie all together, and hold likewise a community of women, as it is another of their tenets that they can commit no moral sin. I am personally acquainted with most of them, and I can assure you the above mentioned are facts.*

* We abridge from the Christian Journal the account given in that periodical of the rise and extinction of this sect of fanatics: —"This party of religious enthusiasts arose in Irvine in 1783. The leaders were Mr White, minister of the Relief congregation there, and Mrs Buchan, from whom they derived their name. Though but half a century has elapsed since this delusion commenced, it has become very difficult to procure authentic information respecting it. Mr White was a native of St Ninians, and a licentiate of the Church of Scotland. He has often preached both in the High and Low Churches of Paisley; and it is said dwelt much on the terrors of the law. His preaching was acceptable; but he is described as having been a man of very slender parts, and extremely vain. What induced him to leave the Establishment, and join the Relief body, has not been ascertained. His acquaintance with Mrs Buchan commenced on his coming to Glasgow, in April, 1783, to assist at dispensing the Lord's Supper. The maiden name of this artful enthusiast was Elspet Simson: she was born about 1740; and her father kept an inn about half way betwixt Banff and Portsoy. When little more than twenty years of age, she came to Glasgow, where she was engaged as a

This, my dear Sir, is one of the many instances of the folly of leaving the guidance of sound reason and common sense in matters of religion.

Whenever we neglect or despise these sacred monitors,

servant. A short time after she married Robert Buchan, a workman at the Delf work in Glasgow, at which time she belonged to the Scottish Episcopalians; but her husband being a Burgher-Seceder, she adopted his principles, and was admitted into communion with that body. She had several children, but only three were alive when she left her husband—a son and two daughters.

"For several years previous to her delusions becoming public she had been unsettled in her religious belief, and she had adopted many extraordinary and visionary doctrines. She fancied herself the woman foretold in Rev. ch. xii., clothed with the sun, and having the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She does not appear in the beginning of her career to have made any proselytes, and Mr White is the first recorded. Having heard him preach on the sacrament Monday, she pretended she had at once discovered in him a kindred spirit. She addressed a letter to him, expressive of her admiration of his discourse; had a personal interview with him, and by her flatteries gained an entire ascendancy over him. In a few days she followed him to Irvine, becoming an inmate of his house. A change in his doctrine was observed the next Sabbath; and this becoming greater each week, Mrs B. was considered to be the cause of it. He was requested to dismiss her; but he answered he would sooner cut off his right hand. Certain queries were proposed to him, to which he gave written answers. These left no doubt of his deviations from the faith; and the matter was brought before the Presbytery of Glasgow. He was cited before them and appeared. He made no attempt to deny or palliate his errors; and a sentence of suspension was pronounced against him, to which he paid no attention, but continued to preach and disseminate his doctrines. He was then libelled by the Presbytery, appeared in person, defended his doctrines, and was deposed in October, 1783.

"Subsequently to this, Mr White and Mrs Buchan published several pamphlets on their peculiar delusions: one of which is entitled 'The Divine Dictionary, or a treatise indited by holy inspiration, containing the faith and practice of the people called Buchanites; who are actually waiting for the second coming of our Lord, and who believe that they alive shall be changed and translated into the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.' This was only the first number of a large work White intended to publish. In it he calls Mrs B. the woman prophesied of in Rev. ch. xii.; says she is God's only vicegerent on earth in this genera-

the whimsical notions of a perturbated brain are taken for the immediate influences of the Deity, and the wildest fanaticism, and the most inconstant absurdities, will meet with abettors and converts. Nay, I have often thought,

tion; and professes to have learned the sentiments in his work from her, 'though not told,' says he, 'with the same divine simplicity as she declared them.' The style of this work is very poor; in many parts it is obscure, confused, and scarcely intelligible, and indicates a total departure from the truth. Mr W. still continued to reside in Irvine, where he preached first in a tent, and afterwards in his house, and zealously propagated the tenets of Mrs Buchan. Converts were made, mostly inhabitants of the town, who had been members of the Relief body, but some also from places at a distance. They met in the night, and were instructed by the prophetess. Strange accounts were given of their doctrine and manner of worship, which drew the indignation of the populace upon them. The house where they met was several times surrounded, the windows and furniture broken, and greater extremities would have been used, but for the intervention of the magistrates; who at length thought it prudent to dismiss her from the place, which was done in May, 1784. To protect her, they accompanied her a mile out of town; but notwithstanding she was grossly maltreated. She stopped that night with some of her followers near Kilmaurs, and, being joined by Mr White and others in the morning, the whole, about forty in number, proceeded, singing hymns as they went, to Mauchline, and thence by Cumnock, to Closeburn in Dumfriesshire. There they halted, and took possession of the offices of a farm-house, paying for it, and all they asked for.

"This sect paid great attention to their Bible, having it always at hand; spent a great deal of time in singing hymns in which their peculiar tenets were expressed, and in conversing about religion. They believed the last day was at hand—that none of their number should die, but would soon hear the sound of the last trumpet, when all the wicked should be struck dead, and remain so for a thousand years, while they should live and reign with Christ on the earth. They neither married nor gave in marriage, professing to live a holy life as the angels of God, having one common purse, and regarding one another as brothers and sisters. When asked if they had communications for their friends and relations, they answered, they minded not former things or connections, but that their whole attention was devoted to their fellow-saints. Many gross reports were circulated concerning them; but these were generally considered calumnies. For some time they followed no industry, or if they worked, refused all wages, declaring their object in doing so was to mix

that the more out-of-the-way and ridiculous the fancies are, if once they are sanctified under the sacred name of religion, the unhappy mistaken votaries are the more firmly glued to them.

R. B.

No. XI.

TO MISS ———.*

My dear Countrywoman,

I am so impatient to show you that I am once more at peace with you, that I send you the book I mentioned directly rather than wait the uncertain time of my seeing you. I am afraid I have mislaid or lost Collins' Poems, which I promised to Miss Irvin. If I can find them, I will forward them by you; if not, you must apologize for me.

I know you will laugh at it when I tell you that your piano and you together have played the deuce somehow about my heart. My breast has been widowed these many

with others, and inculcate their doctrines. Afterwards, however, they changed their minds, and, removing from Closeburn to the parish of Kirkpatrick-Durham, they rented a considerable farm, which they cultivated in common. In course of time several withdrew and returned to their relations; and, at last, Mrs Buchan died, contrary to her own predictions. On this Mr White acted very disingenuously. He pretended at first she was only in a trance; and afterwards he had her buried privately without the knowledge of her votaries, alleging she was taken up to heaven. A magistrate, however, to his great mortification, obliged him to produce the body, on which he was so affronted, and felt his character so disgraced, that he went off to America. These circumstances must have proved sad blows to the delusion; and accordingly the party gradually dispersed, and dropped out of public view."—M.

* Cromek assigns the composition of this letter to the year 1784, and hazards the conjecture that it may have been addressed to the Peggy alluded to by Burns in his commonplace book. —M.

months, and I thought myself proof against the fascinating witchcraft; but I am afraid you will "feelingly convince me what I am." I say, I am afraid, because I am not sure what is the matter with me. I have one miserable bad symptom; when you whisper, or look kindly to another, it gives me a draught of damnation. I have a kind of wayward wish to be with you ten minutes by yourself, though what I would say, Heaven above knows, for I am sure I know not. I have no formed design in all this; but just, in the nakedness of my heart, write you down a mere matter-of-fact story. You may perhaps give yourself airs of distance on this, and that will completely cure me; but I wish you would not; just let us meet, if you please, in the old beaten way of friendship.

I will not subscribe myself your humble servant, for that is a phrase I think, at least fifty miles off from the heart; but I will conclude with sincerely wishing that the Great Protector of innocence may shield you from the barbed dart of calumny, and hand you by the covert snare of deceit.

R. B.

No. XII.

TO MR JOHN RICHMOND, EDINBURGH.*

MOSSGIEL, *Feb.* 17, 1786.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HAVE not time at present to upbraid you for your silence and neglect; I shall only say I received yours with great

* Mr Richmond was an early friend of the Poet, and it was with him he lodged, when he first went to Edinburgh, and to him we are indebted for many valuable reminiscences of Burns' early efforts in poetry. Connell was the Mauchline carrier, and Smith was then a shopkeeper in Mauchline. It was to this James Smith that Burns addressed one of his performances, beginning "Dear S——, the sleest paukie thief." He died in the West

pleasure. I have inclosed you a piece of rhyming ware for your perusal. I have been very busy with the muses since I saw you, and have composed, among several others, 'The Ordination,' a poem on Mr M'Kinlay's being called to Kilmarnock; 'Scotch Drink,' a poem; 'The Cottar's Saturday Night;' 'An Address to the Devil,' &c. I have likewise completed my poem on the 'Dogs,' but have not shown it to the world. My chief patron now is Mr Aikin in Ayr, who is pleased to express great approbation of my works. Be so good as send me Fergusson, by Connel, and I will remit you the money. I have no news to acquaint you with about Mauchline, they are just going on in the old way. I have some very important news with respect to myself, not the most agreeable—news that I am sure you cannot guess, but I shall give you the particulars another time. I am extremely happy with Smith; he is the only friend I have now in Mauchline. I can scarcely forgive your long neglect of me, and I beg you will let me hear from you regularly by Connel. If you would act your part as a friend, I am sure neither good nor bad fortune should strange or alter me. Excuse haste, as I got yours but yesterday.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours,

ROBERT BURNESS.

Indies. Cromek, who first gave this letter to the public, says, this is the only letter he had met with in which the Poet added the termination, *ess*, to his name as his father and family had spelled it; but in the letter immediately following, it will be seen that at its date he still adhered to the ancient orthography —M.

No. XIII.

TO MR JOHN KENNEDY.

MOSSGIEL, *3d March*, 1786.

SIR,

I HAVE done myself the pleasure of complying with your request in sending you my Cottager. If you have a leisure minute, I should be glad you would copy it and return me either the original or the transcript, as I have not a copy of it by me, and I have a friend who wishes to see it

Now Kennedy, if foot or horse
E'er bring you in by Mauchline Corse,
Lord, man, there's lasses there wad force
A hermit's fancy ;
And down the gate in faith they're worse,
And mair unchancy.

But, as I'm sayin', please step to Dows,
And taste sic gear as Johnnie brews,
Till some bit callan bring me news
That you are there ;
And if we dinna haud a bouze
Ise ne'er drink mair.

It's no I like to sit and swallow,
Then like a swine to puke and wallow ;
But gie me just a true good fallow,
Wi' right engine,
And spunkie ance to make us mellow,
And then we'll shine.

Now, if ye're ane o' warld's folk,
Wha rate the wearer by the cloak,
And sklent on poverty their joke,
Wi bitter sneer,

Wi' you no friendship will I troke,
Nor cheap nor dear.

But if, as I'm informed weel,
Ye hate, as ill's the vera deil,
The flinty heart that canna feel,
Come, Sir, here's tae you!
Hae, there's my haun', I wiss you weel,
And gude be wi' you!

R. B.

No. XIV.

TO MR ROBERT MUIR, KILMARNOCK.*

MOSSGIEL, *20th March*, 1786.

DEAR SIR,

I AM heartily sorry I had not the pleasure of seeing you as you returned through Mauchline; but as I was engaged, I could not be in town before the evening.

I here inclose you my 'Scotch Drink,' and "may the —— follow with a blessing for your edification." I hope, sometime before we hear the gowk, to have the pleasure of seeing you at Kilmarnock, when I intend we shall have a gill between us, in a mutchkin-stoup; which will be a great comfort and consolation to,

Dear Sir,
Your humble servant,
ROBERT BURNESS.

* Mr Muir was a staunch friend of Burns, and did him many good offices. When the Edinburgh edition of his poems was announced, Muir subscribed for 40 copies, as well as used his influence among his friends and acquaintances to induce them to be equally liberal.—M.

No. XV.

TO MR AIKIN.

MOSSGIEL, 3*d April*, 1786.

DEAR SIR,

I RECEIVED your kind letter with double pleasure on account of the second flattering instance of Mrs C.'s notice and approbation. I assure you I

"Turn out the brunt side o' my shin,"

as the famous Ramsay, of jingling memory, says, at such a patroness. Present her my most grateful acknowledgments in your very best manner of telling truth. I have inscribed the following stanza on the blank leaf of Miss Mores' work.

Thou flattering mark of friendship kind,
Still may thy pages call to mind
The dear the beauteous donor:
Though sweetly female every part,
Yet such a head, and more the heart,
Does both the sexes honour.
She show'd her taste refined and just
When she selected thee,
Yet deviating own I must,
For so approving me,
But kind still, I mind still,
The giver in the gift,
I'll bless her, and wiss her
A friend above the Lift.

My proposals for publishing I am just going to send to press. I expect to hear from you by the first opportunity.

I am, ever dear Sir, yours,

ROBERT BURNESS.

No. XVI.

TO MR M'WHINNIE, WRITER, AYR.*

MOSSGIEL, 17*th April*, 1786.

IT is injuring some hearts, those hearts that elegantly bear the impression of the good Creator, to say to them you give them the trouble of obliging a friend; for this reason, I only tell you that I gratify my own feelings in requesting your friendly offices with respect to the inclosed, because I know it will gratify yours to assist me in it to the utmost of your power.

I have sent you four copies, as I have no less than eight dozen, which is a great deal more than I shall ever need.

Be sure to remember a poor poet militant in your prayers. He looks forward with fear and trembling to that, to him, important moment which stamps the die with—with—with, perhaps, the eternal disgrace of,

My dear Sir,
Your humble,
afflicted, tormented,
ROBERT BURNS.

No. XVII.

TO MR ROBERT MUIR, KILMARNOCK.

MOSSGIEL, *Friday Morning.*

MY FRIEND, MY BROTHER,

WARM recollection of an absent friend presses so hard upon my heart, that I send him the prefixed bagatelle (the

* This letter inclosed some subscription lists for his poems, and it is gratifying to know that this gentleman, as well as the rest of the Poet's friends, were not backward in fulfilling the Poet's wishes.—M.

Calf), pleased with the thought that it will greet the man of my bosom, and be a kind of distant language of friendship.

You will have heard that poor Armour has repaid me double. A very fine boy and a girl have awakened a thought and feelings that thrill, some with tender pressure and some with foreboding anguish, through my soul.

The poem was nearly an extemporaneous production, on a wager with Mr Hamilton, that I would not produce a poem on the subject in a given time.

If you think it worth while, read it to Charles and Mr W. Parker, and if they choose a copy of it, it is at their service, as they are men whose friendship I shall be proud to claim, both in this world and that which is to come.

I believe all hopes of staying at home will be abortive; but more of this when, in the latter part of next week, you shall be troubled with a visit from,

My dear Sir,

Your most devoted,

R. B.

No. XVIII.

TO MR JOHN KENNEDY.

MOSSGIEL, 20*th April*, 1786.

SIR,

BY some neglect in Mr Hamilton, I did not hear of your kind request for a subscription paper till this day. I will not attempt any acknowledgment for this, nor the manner in which I see your name in Mr Hamilton's subscription list. Allow me only to say, Sir, I feel the weight of the debt.

I have here, likewise, inclosed a small piece, the very latest of my productions.* I am a good deal pleased with

* The piece alluded to was the 'Mountain Daisy;' in the MS. it is entitled, 'The Gowan.'—M.

some sentiments myself as they are just the native querulous feelings of a heart, which, as the elegantly melting Gray says, " melancholy has marked for her own."

Our race comes on apace—that much expected scene of revelry and mirth—but to me it brings no joy equal to that meeting with which your last flattered the expectation of,

Sir, your indebted humble servant,

R. B.

No. XIX.

TO MR JOHN KENNEDY.

MOSSGIEL, 17*th May*, 1786.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE sent you the above hasty copy as I promised.* In about three weeks I shall probably set the press agoing. I am much hurried at present, otherwise your diligence so very friendly in my subscription should have a more lengthened acknowledgment.

Dear Sir,

Your obliged servant,

R. B.

No. XX.

TO MONS. JAMES SMITH, MAUCHLINE.†

Monday Morning, MOSSGIEL, 1786.

MY DEAR SIR.

I WENT to Dr Douglas yesterday, fully resolved to take the opportunity of Captain Smith; but I found the Doc-

* This was a copy of the well-known epistle to Rankine.—M.

† It is mentioned before that Smith died in Jamaica, to which colony he had gone for the purpose of improving his worldly prospects after they had been ruined in this country.—M.

tor with a Mr and Mrs White, both Jamaicans, and they have deranged my plans altogether. They assure him that to send me from Savannah la Mar to Port Antonio, will cost my master, Charles Douglas, upwards of fifty pounds; besides running the risk of throwing myself into a pleuritic fever in consequence of hard travelling in the sun. On these accounts, he refuses sending me with Smith; but a vessel sails from Greenock the first of September, right for the place of my destination. The Captain of her is an intimate friend of Mr Gavin Hamilton's, and as good a fellow as heart could wish: with him I am destined to go. Where I shall shelter, I know not, but I hope to weather the storm. Perish the drop of blood of mine that fears them! I know their worst, and am prepared to meet it:—

"I'll laugh, and sing, and shake my leg,
As lang's I dow."

On Thursday morning, if you can muster as much self-denial as to be out of bed about seven o'clock, I shall see you as I ride through to Cumnock. After all, Heaven bless the sex! I feel there is still happiness for me among them:—

"O woman, lovely woman! Heaven designed you
To temper man!—we had been brutes without you!"

R. B.

No. XXI.

TO MR DAVID BRICE.*

MOSSGIEL, *June* 12, 1786.

DEAR BRICE,

I RECEIVED your message by G. Paterson, and as I am not very throng at present, I just write to let you know

* Brice was to trade a shoemaker, and when he received this letter he was working in Glasgow.—M.

that there is such a worthless, rhyming reprobate, as your humble servant, still in the land of the living, though I can scarcely say, in the place of hope. I have no news to tell you that will give me any pleasure to mention, or you to hear.

Poor ill-advised, ungrateful Armour came home on Friday last. You have heard all the particulars of that affair, and a black affair it is. What she thinks of her conduct now I don't know; one thing I do know—she has made me completely miserable. Never man loved, or rather adored a woman more than I did her; and, to confess a truth between you and me, I do still love her to distraction after all, though I won't tell her so if I were to see her, which I don't want to do. My poor dear unfortunate Jean! how happy have I been in thy arms! It is not the losing her that makes me so unhappy, but for her sake I feel most severely: I foresee she is in the road to, I am afraid, eternal ruin.

May Almighty God forgive her ingratitude and perjury to me, as I from my very soul forgive her; and may his grace be with her and bless her in all her future life! I can have no nearer idea of the place of eternal punishment than what I have felt in my own breast on her account. I have tried often to forget her; I have run into all kinds of dissipation and riots, mason-meetings, drinking-matches, and other mischief, to drive her out of my head, but all in vain. And now for a grand cure; the ship is on her way home that is to take me out to Jamaica; and then, farewell dear old Scotland; and farewell dear ungrateful Jean! for never, never will I see you more.

You will have heard that I am going to commence poet in print; and to-morrow my works go to the press. I expect it will be a volume of about two hundred pages—it is just the last foolish action I intend to do; and then turn a wise man as fast as possible.

Believe me to be, dear Brice,

Your friend and well-wisher,

R. B.

No. XXII.

TO MR ROBERT AIKIN.*

AYRSHIRE, 1786.

SIR,

I WAS with Wilson, my printer, t'other day, and settled all our by-gone matters between us. After I had paid him all demands, I made him the offer of the second edition, on the hazard of being paid out of the first and readiest, which he declines. By his account, the paper of a thousand copies would cost about twenty-seven pounds, and the printing about fifteen or sixteen: he offers to agree to this for the printing, if I will advance for the paper, but this, you know, is out of my power; so farewell hopes of a second edition 'till I grow richer! an epocha which, I think, will arrive at the payment of the British national debt.

There is scarcely any thing hurts me so much in being disappointed of my second edition, as not having it in my power to show my gratitude to Mr Ballantine, by publishing my poem of 'The Brigs of Ayr.' I would detest myself as a wretch, if I thought I were capable in a very long life of forgetting the honest, warm, and tender delicacy with which he enters into my interests. I am sometimes pleased with myself in my grateful sensations; but I believe, on the whole, I have very little merit in it, as my gratitude is not a virtue, the consequence of reflection; but sheerly the instinctive emotion of my heart, too inattentive to allow worldly maxims and views to settle into selfish habits.

* Dr Currie says, "This letter was evidently written under the distress of mind occasioned by our Poet's separation from Mrs Burns." It was to Mr Aikin that the Poet inscribed his 'Cotter's Saturday Night.' Betwixt the lawyer—for that was Mr Aikin's profession—and the Poet, some estrangement of feeling afterwards took place in consequence of the different views each was inclined to take regarding the delicate case of Jean Armour.—M.

I have been feeling all the various rotations and movements within, respecting the excise. There are many things plead strongly against it; the uncertainty of getting soon into business; the consequences of my follies, which may perhaps make it impracticable for me to stay at home; and besides I have for some time been pining under secret wretchedness, from causes which you pretty well know—the pang of disappointment, the sting of pride, with some wandering stabs of remorse, which never fail to settle on my vitals like vultures, when attention is not called away by the calls of society, or the vagaries of the muse. Even, in the hour of social mirth, my gaiety is the madness of an intoxicated criminal under the hands of the executioner. All these reasons urge me to go abroad, and to all these reasons I have only one answer—the feelings of a father. This, in the present mood I am in, overbalances every thing that can be laid in the scale against it.

You may perhaps think it an extravagant fancy, but it is a sentiment which strikes home to my very soul: though sceptical in some points of our current belief, yet, I think, I have every evidence for the reality of a life beyond the stinted bourne of our present existence; if so, then, how should I, in the presence of that tremendous Being, the Author of existence, how should I meet the reproaches of those who stand to me in the dear relation of children, whom I deserted in the smiling innocency of helpless infancy? O, thou great unknown Power!—thou almighty God! who hast lighted up reason in my breast, and blessed me with immortality!—I have frequently wandered from that order and regularity necessary for the perfection of thy works, yet thou hast never left me nor forsaken me!

Since I wrote the foregoing sheet, I have seen something of the storm of mischief thickening over my folly-devoted head. Should you, my friends, my benefactors, be successful in your applications for me, perhaps it may not be in my power in that way, to reap the fruit of your friendly efforts. What I have written in the preceding pages, is

the settled tenor of my present resolution; but should inimical circumstances forbid me closing with your kind offer, or enjoying it only threaten to entail farther misery———

To tell the truth, I have little reason for complaint; as the world, in general, has been kind to me fully up to my deserts. I was, for some time past, fast getting into the pining, distrustful snarl of the misanthrope. I saw myself alone, unfit for the struggle of life, shrinking at every rising cloud in the chance-directed atmosphere of fortune, while, all defenceless, I looked about in vain for a cover. It never occurred to me, at least never with the force it deserved, that this world is a busy scene, and man, a creature destined for a progressive struggle; and that, however I might possess a warm heart and inoffensive manners (which last, by the bye, was rather more than I could well boast); still, more than these passive qualities, there was something to be done. When all my school-fellows and youthful compeers (those misguided few excepted who joined, to use a Gentoo phrase, the "hallachores" of the human race) were striking off with eager hope and earnest intent, in some one or other of the many paths of busy life, I was "standing idle in the market-place," or only left the chase of the butterfly from flower to flower, to hunt fancy from whim to whim.

You see, Sir, that if to know one's errors were a probability of mending them, I stand a fair chance: but, according to the reverend Westminster divines, though conviction must precede conversion, it is very far from always implying it.

R. B.

No. XXIII.

TO JOHN BALLANTINE, OF AYR.

June, 1786.

HONOURED SIR,

MY proposals came to hand last night, and, knowing that you would wish to have it in your power to do me a service as early as any body, I inclose you half a sheet of them. I must consult you, first opportunity, on the propriety of sending my quondam friend, Mr Aikin, a copy. If he is now reconciled to my character as an honest man, I would do it with all my soul; but I would not be beholden to the noblest being ever God created, if he imagined me to be a rascal. Apropos, old Mr Armour prevailed with him to mutilate that unlucky paper yesterday. Would you believe it? though I had not a hope, nor even a wish, to make her mine after her conduct; yet, when he told me, the names were all out of the paper, my heart died within me, and he cut my veins with the news. Perdition seize her falsehood.*

R. B.

No. XXIV.

TO JOHN RICHMOND, EDINBURGH.

MOSSGIEL, *9th July*, 1786.

WITH the sincerest grief I read your letter. You are truly a son of misfortune. I shall be extremely anxious to hear from you how your health goes on; if it is any way re-establishing, or if Leith promises well: in short, how you feel in the inner man.

* Old Armour, by his bigotted pride and foolish scruples, seems to have inflicted unnecessary anguish on two hearts sincerely attached to each other.—M.

No news worth any thing; only godly Bryan was in the inquisition yesterday, and half the countryside as witnesses against him. He still stands out steady and denying: but proof was led yesternight of circumstances highly suspicious; almost *de facto;* one of the servant girls made faith that she upon a time rashly entered into the house, to speak in your cant, "in the hour of cause."

I have waited on Armour since her return home; not from the least view of reconciliation, but merely to ask for her health, and to you I will confess it, from a foolish hankering fondness, very ill placed indeed. The mother forbade me the house, nor did Jean show that penitence that might have been expected. However, the priest, I am informed, will give me a certificate as a single man, if I comply with the rules of the church, which for that very reason I intend to do.

I am going to put on sackcloth and ashes this day. I am indulged so far as to appear in my own seat. *Peccavi, pater, miserere mei.* My book will be ready in a fortnight. If you have any subscribers, return them by Connell. The Lord stand with the righteous; amen, amen.

R. B.

No. XXV.

TO MR DAVID BRICE,

SHOEMAKER, GLASGOW.

MOSSGIEL, 17*th July*, 1786.

I HAVE been so throng printing my Poems, that I could scarcely find as much time as to write to you. Poor Armour is come back again to Mauchline, and I went to call for her, and her mother forbade me the house, nor did she herself express much sorrow for what she has done. I have already appeared publicly in church, and was indulged in

the liberty of standing in my own seat. I do this to get a certificate as a bachelor, which Mr Auld has promised me. I am now fixed to go for the West Indies in October. Jean and her friends insisted much that she should stand along with me in the kirk, but the minister would not allow it, which bred a great trouble I assure you, and I am blamed as the cause of it, though I am sure I am innocent; but I am very much pleased, for all that, not to have had her company. I have no news to tell you that I remember. I am really happy to hear of your welfare, and that you are so well in Glasgow. I must certainly see you before I leave the country. I shall expect to hear from you soon, and am,

Dear Brice,

Yours,—R. B

No. XXVI.

SIR,

YOURS this moment I unseal,
And faith I'm gay and hearty!
To tell the truth, and shame the deil,
I am as fou' as Bartie:
But Foorsday, Sir, my promise leal,
Expect me o' your partie,
If on a beastie I can speel,
Or hurl in a cartie.

Yours,

ROBERT BURNS.*

MACHLIN, *Monday night*, 10 *o'clock*.

* The original MS. of the above card is preserved in the Paisley Library. We are informed it was presented to the library by the late Mr John Clarkson, of M'Gavin and Clarkson, threadmakers, Paisley. To whom it was addressed, the MS. affords no clue. An inaccurate copy of it appears in Mr Cunningham's edition of the Poet's works.—M.

No. XXVII.

TO MR JOHN RICHMOND.

OLD ROME FOREST, *30th July*, 1786.

MY DEAR RICHMOND,

MY hour is now come—you and I will never meet in Britain more. I have orders, within three weeks at farthest, to repair aboard the Nancy, Captain Smith, from Clyde, to Jamaica, and to call at Antigua. This, except to our friend Smith, whom God long preserve, is a secret about Mauchline. Would you believe it? Armour has got a warrant to throw me in jail till I find security for an enormous sum. This they keep an entire secret, but I got it by a channel they little dream of; and I am wandering from one friend's house to another, and, like a true son of the gospel, "have no where to lay my head." I know you will pour an execration on her head, but spare the poor, ill-advised girl, for my sake; though may all the furies that rend the injured, enraged lover's bosom, await her mother until her latest hour! I write in a moment of rage, reflecting on my miserable situation—exiled, abandoned, forlorn. I can write no more—let me hear from you by the return of coach. I will write you ere I go.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours, here and hereafter,

R. B.

No. XXVIII.

TO MRS DUNLOP OF DUNLOP.*

AYRSHIRE, *July*, 1786.

MADAM,

I AM truly sorry I was not at home yesterday, when I was so much honoured with your order for my copies, and incomparably more by the handsome compliments you are pleased to pay my poetic abilities. I am fully persuaded that there is not any class of mankind so feelingly alive to the titilations of applause as the sons of Parnassus: nor is it easy to conceive how the heart of the poor bard dances with rapture, when those, whose character in life gives them a right to be polite judges, honour him with their approbation. Had you been thoroughly acquainted with me, Madam, you could not have touched my darling heart-chord more sweetly than by noticing my attempts to celebrate your illustrious ancestor, the Saviour of his country.

"Great patriot hero! ill-requited chief!"

The first book I met with in my early years, which I perused with pleasure, was, 'The Life of Hannibal;' the

* Speaking of his letters, Mr Jeffray says, (see Edinburgh Review, for Jan. 1809,) "Of his other letters, those addressed to Mrs Dunlop are, in our opinion, by far the best. He appears from first to last, to have stood somewhat in awe of this excellent lady, and to have been no less sensible of her sound judgment and strict sense of propriety, than of her steady and generous partiality." In support of his opinion, the critic adduces various passages in several letters, which occur afterwards, and to which we shall direct the reader's attention when they occur. Mrs Dunlop was a kind and steady friend to the Bard, from the first time he was known as an author till the close of his melancholy career, and exercised a great and beneficial influence over his wayward muse. Burns, with infinite address, though we daresay with the utmost sincerity, has, in this letter, flattered the family predilections of the worthy and talented lady, who was amongst the first in the higher walks of life to pay befitting homage to his genius.—M.

next was, 'The History of Sir William Wallace:' for several of my earlier years I had few other authors; and many a solitary hour have I stole out, after the laborious vocations of the day, to shed a tear over their glorious, but unfortunate stories. In these boyish days I remember, in particular, being struck with that part of Wallace's story where these lines occur—

> "Syne to the Leglen wood, when it was late,
> To make a silent and a safe retreat."

I chose a fine summer Sunday, the only day my line of life allowed, and walked half a dozen of miles to pay my respects to the Leglen wood, with as much devout enthusiasm as ever pilgrim did to Loretto; and as I explored every den and dell where I could suppose my heroic countryman to have lodged, I recollect (for even then I was a rhymer) that my heart glowed with a wish to be able to make a song on him in some measure equal to his merits.

R. B.

No. XXIX.

TO MR JOHN KENNEDY.*

KILMARNOCK, *August*, 1786.

MY DEAR SIR,

YOUR truly facetious epistle of the 3d instant gave me much entertainment. I was only sorry I had not the pleasure of seeing you as I passed your way, but we shall bring up all our lee way on Wednesday, the 16th current, when I hope to have it in my power to call on you, and take a kind, very probably a last adieu, before I go for Jamaica;

* Mr Kennedy, to whom the Poet has addressed several letters, resided at this time at Dumfries House, and appears, from the above letter and others which precede it, to have interested himself in procuring subscriptions for the Kilmarnock edition of his poems.—M.

and I expect orders to repair to Greenock every day.—I have at last made my public appearance, and am solemnly inaugurated into the numerous class. Could I have got a carrier, you should have had a score of vouchers for my authorship; but, now you have them, let them speak for themselves,—

Farewell, dear friend! may guid luck hit you,
And 'mang her favourites admit you,
If e'er Detraction shore to smit you,
May nane believe him,
And ony deil that thinks to get you,
Good Lord, deceive him.

R. B.

No. XXX.

TO MISS ALEXANDER.

MOSSGIEL, 18*th Nov.* 1786.

MADAM,

POETS are such outré beings, so much the children of wayward fancy and capricious whim, that I believe the world generally allows them a larger latitude in the laws of propriety, than the sober sons of judgment and prudence. I mention this as an apology for the liberties that a nameless stranger has taken with you in the inclosed poem, which he begs leave to present you with. Whether it has poetical merit any way worthy of the theme, I am not the proper judge: but it is the best my abilities can produce; and what to a good heart will, perhaps, be a superior grace, it is equally sincere as fervent.

The scenery was nearly taken from real life, though I dare say, Madam, you do not recollect it, as I believe you scarcely noticed the poetic *reveur* as he wandered by you. I had roved out as chance directed, in the favourite haunts of my muse, on the banks of the Ayr, to view nature in all

the gaiety of the vernal year. The evening sun was flaming over the distant western hills; not a breath stirred the crimson opening blossom, or the verdant spreading leaf. It was a golden moment for a poetic heart. I listened to the feathered warblers, pouring their harmony on every hand, with a congenial kindred regard, and frequently turned out of my path, lest I should disturb their little songs, or frighten them to another station. Surely, said I to myself, he must be a wretch indeed, who, regardless of your harmonious endeavour to please him, can eye your elusive flights to discover your secret recesses, and to rob you of all the property nature gives you—your dearest comforts, your helpless nestlings. Even the hoary hawthorn twig that shot across the way, what heart at such a time but must have been interested in its welfare, and wished it preserved from the rudely-browsing cattle, or the withering eastern blast? Such was the scene,—and such the hour, when in a corner of my prospect, I spied one of the fairest pieces of nature's workmanship that ever crowned a poetic landscape or met a poet's eye, those visionary bards excepted, who hold commerce with aërial beings! Had Calumny and Villany taken my walk, they had at that moment sworn eternal peace with such an object.

What an hour of inspiration for a poet! It would have raised plain dull historic prose into metaphor and measure.

The inclosed song was the work of my return home; and perhaps it but poorly answers what might have been expected from such a scene.

I have the honour to be,
Madam,
Your most obedient and very
humble servant,

R. B.

No. XXXI.

TO MRS STEWART, OF STAIR.

1786.

MADAM,

THE hurry of my preparations for going abroad has hindered me from performing my promise so soon as I intended. I have here sent you a parcel of songs, &c., which never made their appearance, except to a friend or two at most. Perhaps some of them may be no great entertainment to you, but of that I am far from being an adequate judge. The song to the tune of "Ettrick banks" [The bonnie lass of Ballochmyle] you will easily see the impropriety of exposing much, even in manuscript. I think, myself, it has some merit; both as a tolerable description of one of nature's sweetest scenes, a July evening; and one of the finest pieces of nature's workmanship, the finest indeed we know any thing of, an amiable, beautiful young woman;* but I have no common friend to procure me that permission, without which I would not dare to spread the copy.

I am quite aware, Madam, what task the world would assign me in this letter. The obscure bard, when any of the great condescend to take notice of him, should heap the altar with the incense of flattery. Their high ancestry, their own great and god-like qualities and actions, should be recounted with the most exaggerated description. This, Madam, is a task for which I am altogether unfit. Besides a certain disqualifying pride of heart, I know nothing of your connections in life, and have no access to where your real character is to be found—the company of your compeers: and more, I am afraid that even the most refined adulation is by no means the road to your good opinion.

One feature of your character I shall ever with grateful pleasure remember;—the reception I got when I had the

* Miss Alexander.

honour of waiting on you at Stair. I am little acquainted with politeness, but I know a good deal of benevolence of temper and goodness of heart. Surely did those in exalted stations know how happy they could make some classes of their inferiors by condescension and affability, they would never stand so high, measuring out with every look the height of their elevation, but condescend as sweetly as did Mrs Stewart of Stair.

R. B.

No. XXXII.

TO MR ROBERT MUIR.

MOSSGIEL, 18*th Nov.* 1786.

MY DEAR SIR,

INCLOSED you have 'Tam Samson,' as I intend to print him. I am thinking for my Edinburgh expedition on Monday or Tuesday, come se'ennight, for pos. I will see you on Tuesday first.

I am ever,

Your much indebted,

R. B.*

* A wider sphere was now opened to the Poet, through the kind exertions of Dr Blacklock, to whom the Reverend Mr Lawrie had forwarded a copy of the first edition of his poems. Dr Blacklock felt and fully appreciated the extraordinary merits of his muse, and suggested that a second edition should be brought out in Edinburgh, in the following letter addressed to the Rev. Mr Lawrie, a copy of which the latter transmitted to Mr Gavin Hamilton, who, in turn, communicated its contents to Burns, and thus determined him to abandon his West India project.

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—I ought to have acknowledged your favour long ago, not only as a testimony of your kind remembrance, but as it gave me an opportunity of sharing one of the finest, and, perhaps, one of the most genuine entertainments, of which the human mind is susceptible. A number of avocations retarded my progress in reading the poems; at last, how-

No. XXXIII.

IN THE NAME OF THE NINE. *Amen.*

WE, Robert Burns, by virtue of a warrant from Nature, bearing date the twenty-fifth day of January, Anno Domini

ever, I have finished that pleasing perusal. Many instances have I seen of Nature's force and beneficence exerted under numerous and formidable disadvantages; but none equal to that which you have been kind enough to present me. There is a pathos and delicacy in his serious poems, a vein of wit and humour in those of a more festive turn, which cannot be too much admired, nor too warmly approved; and I think I shall never open the book without feeling my astonishment renewed and increased. It was my wish to have expressed my approbation in verse; but whether from declining life, or a temporary depression of spirits, it is at present out of my power to accomplish that agreeable intention.

"Mr Stewart, Professor of Morals in this University, had formerly read me three of the poems, and I had desired him to get my name inserted among the subscribers: but whether this was done, or not, I never could learn. I have little intercourse with Dr Blair, but will take care to have the poems communicated to him by the intervention of some mutual friend. It has been told me by a gentleman, to whom I showed the performances, and who sought a copy with diligence and ardour, that the whole impression is already exhausted. It were, therefore, much to be wished, for the sake of the young man, that a second edition, more numerous than the former, could immediately be printed: as it appears certain that its intrinsic merit, and the exertion of the author's friends, might give it a more universal circulation than any thing of the kind which has been published within my memory."

The Reverend Mr Lawrie also wrote to Burns in the following terms.

22*d December*, 1786.

"DEAR SIR,—I last week received a letter from Dr Blacklock, in which he expresses a desire of seeing you. I write this to you, that you may lose no time in waiting upon him, should you not yet have seen him.

"I rejoice to hear, from all corners, of your rising fame, and I wish and expect it may tower still higher by the new publication. But, as a friend, I warn you to prepare to meet with your share of detraction and envy—a train that always accompany great men. For your comfort I am in great hopes that the number of

one thousand seven hundred and fifty-nine,* Poet Laureat, and Bard-in-Chief, in and over the districts and countries of Kyle, Cunningham, and Carrick, of old extent, To our trusty and well-beloved William Chalmers and John M'Adam, students and practitioners in the ancient and mysterious science of confounding right and wrong.

RIGHT TRUSTY,

Be it known unto you, That whereas in the course of our care and watchings over the order and police of all and sundry the manufacturers, retainers, and venders of poesy; bards, poets, poetasters, rhymers, jinglers, songsters, ballad-singers, &c. &c. &c. &c. male and female—We have discovered a certain nefarious, abominable, and wicked song or ballad, a copy whereof We have here inclosed; Our Will therefore is, that Ye pitch upon and appoint the most execrable individual of that most execrable species, known by the appellation, phrase, and nickname of The Deil's Yell Nowte :† and after having caused him to kindle a fire at the

your friends and admirers will increase, and that you have some chance of ministerial, or even * * * * patronage. Now, my friend, such rapid success is very uncommon: and do you think yourself in no danger of suffering by applause and a full purse? Remember Solomon's advice, which he spoke from experience, "stronger is he that conquers," &c. Keep fast hold of your rural simplicity and purity, like Telemachus, by Mentor's aid, in Calypso's isle, or even in that of Cyprus. I hope *you* have also Minerva with you. I need not tell you how much a modest diffidence and invincible temperance adorn the most shining talents, and elevate the mind, and exalt and refine the imagination, even of a poet.

"I hope you will not imagine I speak from suspicion or evil report. I assure you I speak from love and good report, and good opinion, and a strong desire to see you shine as much in the sunshine as you have done in the shade, and in the practice as you do in the theory of virtue. This is my prayer, in return for your elegant composition in verse. All here join in compliments and good wishes for your further prosperity."—M.

* His birth-day.

† Old bachelors;—so says Dr Currie; but Gilbert Burns alleges it is a scoffing appellation sometimes given to sheriff's officers, and other executors of the law, and that it is in that sense his brother has used it.—M.

Cross of Ayr, ye shall, at noon tide of the day, put into the said wretch's merciless hands the said copy of the said nefarious and wicked song, to be consumed by fire in presence of all beholders, in abhorrence of, and terrorem to, all such compositions and composers. And this in nowise leave ye undone, but have it executed in every point as this our mandate bears, before the twenty-fourth current, when in person We hope to applaud your faithfulness and zeal.

Given at Mauchline this twentieth day of November, Anno Domini one thousand seven hundred and eighty-six.

God save the Bard!

No. XXXIV.

TO DR MACKENZIE, MAUCHLINE;

INCLOSING HIM VERSES ON DINING WITH LORD DAER.

Wednesday Morning.

DEAR SIR,

I NEVER spent an afternoon among great folks with half that pleasure as when, in company with you, I had the honour of paying my devoirs to that plain, honest, worthy man, the professor. [Dugald Stewart.] I would be delighted to see him perform acts of kindness and friendship, though I were not the object; he does it with such a grace. I think his character, divided into ten parts, stands thus,—four parts Socrates—four parts Nathaniel—and two parts Shakspeare's Brutus.

The foregoing verses were really extempore, but a little corrected since. They may entertain you a little with the help of that partiality with which you are so good as to favour the performances of,

Dear Sir,

Your very humble servant,

R. B.

No. XXXV.

TO GAVIN HAMILTON, Esq., MAUCHLINE.

EDINBURGH, *Dec. 7th*, 1786.

HONOURED SIR,

I HAVE paid every attention to your commands, but can only say what perhaps you will have heard before this reach you, that Muirkirklands were bought by a John Gordon, W. S., but for whom I know not; Mauchlands, Haugh Miln, &c., by a Fredrick Fotheringham, supposed to be for Ballochmyle Laird, and Adam-hill and Shawood were bought for Oswald's folks.—This is so imperfect an account, and will be so late ere it reach you, that were it not to discharge my conscience I would not trouble you with it; but after all my diligence I could make it no sooner nor better.

For my own affairs, I am in a fair way of becoming as eminent as Thomas à Kempis or John Bunyan; and you may expect henceforth to see my birth-day inserted among the wonderful events, in the poor Robin's and Aberdeen Almanacks, along with the black Monday, and the battle of Bothwell-bridge.—My Lord Glencairn and the Dean of Faculty, Mr H. Erskine, have taken me under their wing; and by all probability I shall soon be the tenth worthy, and the eighth wise man of the world. Through my lord's influence it is inserted in the records of the Caledonian Hunt, that they universally, one and all, subscribe for the second edition.—My subscription bills come out to-morrow, and you shall have some of them next post.—I have met in Mr Dalrymple of Orangefield, what Solomon emphatically calls "a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."—The warmth with which he interests himself in my affairs is of the same enthusiastic kind which you, Mr Aikin, and the few patrons that took notice of my earlier poetic days, showed for the poor unlucky devil of a poet.

I always remember Mrs Hamilton and Miss Kennedy in my poetic prayers, but you both in prose and verse.

May cauld ne'er catch you but a hap,
Nor hunger but in plenty's lap!
Amen! R. B.

No. XXXVI.

TO JOHN BALLANTINE, Esq., BANKER, AYR.

EDINBURGH, 13*th Dec.* 1786.

MY HONOURED FRIEND,

I WOULD not write you till I could have it in my power to give you some account of myself and my matters, which by the bye is often no easy task.—I arrived here on Tuesday was se'nnight, and have suffered ever since I came to town with a miserable head-ache and stomach complaint, but am now a good deal better.—I have found a worthy warm friend in Mr Dalrymple of Orangefield, who introduced me to Lord Glencairn, a man whose worth and brotherly kindness to me, I shall remember when time shall be no more.—By his interest it is passed in the "Caledonian Hunt," and entered in their books, that they are to take each a copy of the second edition, for which they are to pay one guinea.—I have been introduced to a good many of the *noblesse*, but my avowed patrons and patronesses are, the Duchess of Gordon—the Countess of Glencairn, with my Lord, and Lady Betty*—the Dean of Faculty—Sir John Whitefoord.—I have likewise warm friends among the literati; Professors Stewart, Blair, and Mr Mackenzie —the Man of Feeling.—An unknown hand left ten guineas for the Ayrshire bard with Mr Sibbald, which I got. I since have discovered my generous unknown friend to be Patrick Miller, Esq., brother to the Justice Clerk; and

* Lady Betty Cunningham.

drank a glass of claret with him by invitation at his own house yesternight. I am nearly agreed with Creech to print my book, and I suppose I will begin on Monday, I will send a subscription bill or two, next post; when I intend writing my first kind patron, Mr Aikin. I saw his son to-day, and he is very well.

Dugald Stewart, and some of my learned friends, put me in the periodical paper called the Lounger,* a copy of which I here inclose you.—I was, Sir, when I was first honoured with your notice, too obscure; now I tremble lest I should be ruined by being dragged too suddenly into the glare of polite and learned observation.

I shall certainly, my ever honoured patron, write you an account of my every step; and better health and more spirits may enable me to make it something better than this stupid matter-of-fact epistle.

I have the honour to be,
Good Sir,
Your ever grateful humble servant,
R. B.

If any of my friends write me, my direction is, care of Mr Creech, bookseller.

No. XXXVII.

TO MR ROBERT MUIR.

EDINBURGH, *Dec. 20th*, 1786.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HAVE just time for the carrier, to tell you that I received your letter; of which I shall say no more but what a lass of my acquaintance said of her bastard wean; she said she "didna ken wha was the father exactly, but she

* The paper here alluded to was written by Mr Mackenzie, the celebrated author of "The Man of Feeling."

suspected it was some o' thae bonny blackguard smugglers, for it was like them." So I only say, your obliging epistle was like you. I inclose you a parcel of subscription bills. Your affair of sixty copies is also like you; but it would not be like me to comply.

Your friend's notion of my life has put a crotchet in my head of sketching it in some future epistle to you. My compliments to Charles and Mr Parker.

R. B.

No. XXXVIII.

TO MR WILLIAM CHALMERS, WRITER, AYR.

EDINBURGH, *Dec.* 27*th*, 1786.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I CONFESS I have sinned the sin for which there is hardly any forgiveness—ingratitude to friendship—in not writing you sooner; but of all men living, I had intended to have sent you an entertaining letter; and by all the plodding, stupid powers, that in nodding conceited majesty, preside over the dull routine of business—a heavily-solemn oath this!—I am and have been, ever since I came to Edinburgh, as unfit to write a letter of humour, as to write a commentary on the Revelation of St John the Divine, who was banished to the Isle of Patmos, by the cruel and bloody Domitian, son to Vespasian and brother to Titus, both emperors of Rome, and who was himself an emperor, and raised the second or third persecution, I forget which, against the Christians, and after throwing the said Apostle John, brother to the Apostle James, commonly called James the Greater, to distinguish him from another James, who was on some account or other, known by the name of James the Less—after throwing him into a caldron of boiling oil, from which he was miraculously preserved, he banished the poor son of Zebedee to a desert island in the Archipelago,

where he was gifted with the second sight, and saw as many wild beasts as I have seen since I came to Edinburgh; which, a circumstance not very uncommon in story-telling, brings me back to where I set out.

To make you some amends for what, before you reach this paragraph, you will have suffered, I inclose you two poems I have carded and spun since I passed Glenbuck.

One blank in the address to Edinburgh—"Fair B——," is heavenly Miss Burnet, daughter to Lord Monboddo, at whose house I have had the honour to be more than once. There has not been anything nearly like her in all the combinations of beauty, grace, and goodness the great Creator has formed, since Milton's Eve on the first day of her existence.

My direction is—care of Andrew Bruce, merchant, Bridge Street.

R. B.

No. XXXIX.

TO THE EARL OF EGLINTON.

EDINBURGH, *January*, 1787.

MY LORD,

As I have but slender pretensions to philosophy, I cannot rise to the exalted ideas of a citizen of the world, but have all those national prejudices, which I believe glow peculiarly strong in the breast of a Scotchman. There is scarcely any thing to which I am so feelingly alive as the honour and welfare of my country: and as a poet, I have no higher enjoyment than singing her sons and daughters. Fate had cast my station in the veriest shades of life; but never did a heart pant more ardently than mine to be distinguished; though till very lately I looked in vain on every side for a ray of light. It is easy then to guess how much I was gratified with the countenance and approbation

of one of my country's most illustrious sons, when Mr Wauchope called on me yesterday on the part of your lordship. Your munificence, my lord, certainly deserves my very grateful acknowledgments; but your patronage is a bounty peculiarly suited to my feelings. I am not master enough of the etiquette of life to know, whether there be not some impropriety in troubling your lordship with my thanks, but my heart whispered me to do it. From the emotions of my inmost soul I do it. Selfish ingratitude I hope I am incapable of; and mercenary servility, I trust, I shall ever have so much honest pride as to detest.

R. B.

No. XL.

TO JOHN BALLANTINE, ESQ.*

EDINBURGH, *Jan.* 14*th*, 1787.

MY HONOURED FRIEND,

IT gives me a secret comfort to observe in myself that I am not yet so far gone as Willie Gaw's Skate, "past redemption;"† for I have still this favourable symptom of grace, that when my conscience, as in the case of this letter, tells me I am leaving something undone that I ought to do, it teazes me eternally till I do it.

I am still "dark as was Chaos" in respect to futurity My generous friend, Mr Patrick Miller, has been talking with me about a lease of some farm or other in an estate called Dalswinton, which he has lately bought near Dumfries. Some life-rented embittering recollections whisper

* This letter was first published in Cromek's Reliques of Burns, to which work we are also indebted for the one immediately following.—M.

† This is one of a great number of old saws that Burns, when a lad, had picked up from his mother, of which the good old woman had a vast collection.

me that I will be happier any where than in my old neighbourhood, but Mr Miller is no judge of land; and though I dare say he means to favour me, yet he may give me, in his opinion, an advantageous bargain that may ruin me. I am to take a tour by Dumfries as I return, and have promised to meet Mr Miller on his lands some time in May.

I went to a mason-lodge yesternight, where the most Worshipful Grand Master Chartres, and all the Grand Lodge of Scotland visited. The meeting was numerous and elegant; all the different lodges about town were present, in all their pomp. The Grand Master, who presided with great solemnity and honour to himself as a gentleman and mason, among other general toasts, gave "Caledonia, and Caledonia's Bard, Brother Burns," which rung through the whole assembly with multiplied honours and repeated acclamations. As I had no idea such a thing would happen, I was downright thunderstruck, and, trembling in every nerve, made the best return in my power. Just as I had finished, some of the grand officers said so loud that I could hear with a most comforting accent, "Very well indeed!" which set me something to rights again.

I have to-day corrected my 152d page. My best good wishes to Mr Aikin.

I am ever,
Dear Sir,
Your much indebted humble Servant,
R. B.

No. XLI.

TO THE SAME.

January, 1787.

WHILE here I sit, sad and solitary, by the side of a fire in a little country inn, and drying my wet clothes, in pops a poor fellow of a sodger, and tells me he is going to Ayr.

By heavens! say I to myself, with a tide of good spirits which the magic of that sound, Auld Toon o' Ayr, conjured up, I will send my last song to Mr Ballantine. Here it is—

Ye flowery banks o' bonnie Doon,
How can ye blume sae fair;
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae fu' o' care!*

No. XLII.

TO MRS DUNLOP.

EDINBURGH, 15*th January*, 1787.

MADAM,

YOURS of the 9th current, which I am this moment honoured with, is a deep reproach to me for ungrateful neglect. I will tell you the real truth, for I am miserably awkward at a fib—I wished to have written to Dr Moore before I wrote to you; but, though every day since I received yours of December 30th, the idea, the wish to write to him has constantly pressed on my thoughts, yet I could not for my soul set about it. I know his fame and character, and I am one of "the sons of little men." To write him a mere matter-of-fact affair, like a merchant's order, would be disgracing the little character I have; and to write the author of 'The view of Society and Manners' a letter of sentiment—I declare every artery runs cold at the thought. I shall try, however, to write to him to-morrow or next day. His kind interposition in my behalf I have already experienced, as a gentleman waited on me the other day, on the part of Lord Eglinton, with ten guineas, by way of subscription for two copies of my next edition.

The word you object to in the mention I have made of my glorious countryman and your immortal ancestor, is in-

* Vol. II. p. 223.

deed borrowed from Thomson; but it does not strike me as an improper epithet. I distrusted my own judgment on your finding fault with it, and applied for the opinion of some of the literati here, who honour me with their critical strictures, and they all allow it to be proper. The song you ask I cannot recollect, and I have not a copy of it. I have not composed any thing on the great Wallace, except what you have seen in print; and the inclosed, which I will print in this edition.* You will see I have mentioned some others of the name. When I composed my 'Vision' long ago, I had attempted a description of Kyle, of which the additional stanzas are a part as it originally stood. My heart glows with a wish to be able to do justice to the merits of the "Saviour of his Country," which sooner or later I shall at least attempt.

You are afraid I shall grow intoxicated with my prosperity as a poet; alas! Madam, I know myself and the world too well. I do not mean any airs of affected modesty; I am willing to believe that my abilities deserve some notice; but in a most enlightened, informed age and nation, when poetry is and has been the study of men of the first natural genius, aided with all the powers of polite learning, polite books, and polite company—to be dragged forth to the full glare of learned and polite observation, with all my imperfections of awkward rusticity and crude unpolished ideas on my head—I assure you, Madam, I do not dissemble when I tell you I tremble for the consequences. The novelty of a poet in my obscure situation, without any of those advantages which are reckoned necessary for that character, at least at this time of day, has raised a partial tide of public notice which has borne me to a height, where I am absolutely, feelingly certain, my abilities are inadequate to support me; and too surely do I see that time when the same tide will leave me, and re-

* Stanzas in the 'Vision,' Vol. I., p. 85, beginning, "By stately tower or palace fair," and ending with the first Duan.

cede, perhaps, as far below the mark of truth. I do not say this in the ridiculous affectation of self-abasement and modesty. I have studied myself, and know what ground I occupy; and however a friend or the world may differ from me in that particular, I stand for my own opinion, in silent resolve, with all the tenaciousness of property. I mention this to you once for all to disburthen my mind, and I do not wish to hear or say more about it.—But,

"When proud fortune's ebbing tide recedes,"

you will bear me witness, that when my bubble of fame was at the highest I stood unintoxicated, with the inebriating cup in my hand, looking forward with rueful resolve to the hastening time, when the blow of Calumny should dash it to the ground, with all the eagerness of vengeful triumph.

Your patronizing me and interesting yourself in my fame and character as a poet, I rejoice in; it exalts me in my own idea; and whether you can or cannot aid me in my subscription is a trifle. Has a paltry subscription-bill any charms to the heart of a bard, compared with the patronage of the descendant of the immortal Wallace? R. B.

No. XLIII.

TO DR MOORE.*

EDINBURGH, *Jan.* 1787.

SIR,

MRS DUNLOP has been so kind as to send me extracts of letters she has had from you, where you do the rustic bard the honour of noticing him and his works. Those who

* Dr Moore's letter, to which the above was a reply, is as follows:—

"CLIFFORD-STREET, *January* 23*d*, 1787.

"SIR,—I have just received your letter, by which I find I have reason to complain of my friend Mrs Dunlop, for transmitting to

have felt the anxieties and solicitudes of authorship, can only know what pleasure it gives to be noticed in such a manner, by judges of the first character. Your criticisms, Sir, I receive with reverence: only I am sorry they mostly

you extracts from my letters to her, by much too freely and too carelessly written for your perusal. I must forgive her, however, in consideration of her good intention, as you will forgive me, I hope, for the freedom I use with certain expressions, in consideration of my admiration of the poems in general. If I may judge of the author's disposition from his works, with all the other good qualities of a poet, he has not the irritable temper ascribed to that race of men by one of their own number, whom you have the happiness to resemble in ease and curious felicity of expression. Indeed the poetical beauties, however original and brilliant, and lavishly scattered, are not all I admire in your works; the love of your native country, that feeling sensibility to all the objects of humanity, and the independent spirit which breathes through the whole, give me a most favourable impression of the Poet, and have made me often regret that I did not see the poems, the certain effect of which would have been my seeing the author, last summer, when I was longer in Scotland than I have been for many years.

"I rejoice very sincerely at the encouragement you receive at Edinburgh, and I think you peculiarly fortunate in the patronage of Dr Blair, who, I am informed, interests himself very much for you. I beg to be remembered to him; nobody can have a warmer regard for that gentleman than I have, which, independent of the worth of his character, would be kept alive by the memory of our common friend, the late Mr George B——e.

"Before I received your letter, I sent inclosed in a letter to ———, a sonnet by Miss Williams, a young poetical lady, which she wrote on reading your 'Mountain-daisy;' perhaps it may not displease you:—

"'While soon, 'the garden's flaunting flowers' decay,
And scatter'd on the earth neglected lie,
The 'Mountain-daisy,' cherish'd by the ray
A poet drew from heaven, shall never die.
Ah, like that lonely flower the poet rose!
'Mid penury's bare soil and bitter gale;
He felt each storm that on the mountain blows,
Nor ever knew the shelter of the vale.
By genius in her native vigour nurst,
On nature with impassion'd look he gazed;
Then through the cloud of adverse fortune burst
Indignant, and in light unborrow'd blazed.

came too late: a peccant passage or two that I would certainly have altered, were gone to the press.

The hope to be admired for ages is, in by far the greater part of those even who are authors of repute, an unsubstantial dream. For my part, my first ambition was, and still my strongest wish is, to please my compeers, the rustic inmates of the hamlet, while ever-changing language and manners shall allow me to be relished and understood. I am very willing to admit that I have some poetical abilities; and as few, if any, writers, either moral or poetical, are intimately acquainted with the classes of mankind among whom I have chiefly mingled, I may have seen men and manners in a different phasis from what is common, which may assist originality of thought. Still I know very well the novelty of my character has by far the greatest share in the learned and polite notice I have lately had: and in a language where Pope and Churchill have raised the laugh, and Shenstone and Gray drawn the tear; where Thomson and Beattie have painted the landscape, and Lyttelton and Collins described the heart, I am not vain enough to hope for distinguished poetic fame.

R. B.

Scotia! from rude affliction shield thy bard;
His heaven-taught numbers Fame herself will guard.'

"I have been trying to add to the number of your subscribers, but find many of my acquaintance are already among them. I have only to add, that, with every sentiment of esteem, and the most cordial good wishes,

"I am
"Your obedient humble servant,
"J. MOORE."—M.

No. XLIV.

TO THE REV. G. LAWRIE,

NEWMILLS, NEAR KILMARNOCK.

EDINBURGH, *Feb. 5th*, 1787.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

WHEN I look at the date of your kind letter, my heart reproaches me severely with ingratitude in neglecting so long to answer it. I will not trouble you with any account, by way of apology, of my hurried life and distracted attention: do me the justice to believe that my delay by no means proceeded from want of respect. I feel, and ever shall feel for you, the mingled sentiments of esteem for a friend and reverence for a father.

I thank you, Sir, with all my soul for your friendly hints, though I do not need them so much as my friends are apt to imagine. You are dazzled with newspaper accounts and distant reports; but, in reality, I have no great temptation to be intoxicated with the cup of prosperity. Novelty may attract the attention of mankind awhile; to it I owe my present eclat; but I see the time not far distant when the popular tide which has borne me to a height of which I am, perhaps, unworthy, shall recede with silent celerity, and leave me a barren waste of sand, to descend at my leisure to my former station. I do not say this in the affectation of modesty; I see the consequence is unavoidable, and am prepared for it. I had been at a good deal of pains to form a just, impartial estimate of my intellectual powers before I came here: I have not added, since I came to Edinburgh, anything to the account; and I trust I shall take every atom of it back to my shades, the coverts of my unnoticed early years.

In Dr Blacklock, whom I see very often, I have found what I would have expected in our friend, a clear head and an excellent heart.

By far the most agreeable hours I spend in Edinburgh must be placed to the account of Miss Lawrie and her piano forte. I cannot help repeating to you and Mrs Lawrie a compliment that Mr Mackenzie, the celebrated 'Man of Feeling,' paid to Miss Lawrie, the other night, at the concert. I had come in at the interlude, and sat down by him till I saw Miss Lawrie in a seat not very distant, and went up to pay my respects to her. On my return to Mr Mackenzie he asked me who she was; I told him 'twas the daughter of a reverend friend of mine in the west country. He returned, there was something very striking, to his idea, in her appearance. On my desiring to know what it was, he was pleased to say, "She has a great deal of the elegance of a well-bred lady about her, with all the sweet simplicity of a country girl."

My compliments to all the happy inmates of St Margaret's.

I am, my dear Sir,
Yours, most gratefully,
ROBERT BURNS.

No. XLV.

TO DR MOORE.*

EDINBURGH, 15*th February*, 1787.

SIR,

PARDON my seeming neglect in delaying so long to acknowledge the honour you have done me, in your kind notice of me, January 23d. Not many months ago I knew

* We subjoin the answer of Dr Moore to the foregoing:—

"CLIFFORD-STREET, 28*th February*, 1787.

"DEAR SIR,—Your letter of the 15th gave me a great deal of pleasure. It is not surprising that you improve in correctness and taste, considering where you have been for some time past. And I dare swear there is no danger of your admitting any polish which might weaken the vigour of your native powers.

no other employment than following the plough, nor could boast any thing higher than a distant acquaintance with a country clergyman. Mere greatness never embarrasses me; I have nothing to ask from the great, and I do not fear their judgment: but genius, polished by learning, and at its proper point of elevation in the eye of the world, this of late I frequently meet with, and tremble at its approach. I scorn the affectation of seeming modesty to cover self-conceit. That I have some merit I do not deny; but I see with frequent wringings of heart, that the novelty of my character, and the honest national prejudice of my countrymen, have borne me to a height altogether untenable to my abilities.

For the honour Miss Williams has done me, please, Sir, return her in my name my most grateful thanks. I have

"I am glad to perceive that you disdain the nauseous affectation of decrying your own merit as a poet, an affectation which is displayed with most ostentation by those who have the greatest share of self-conceit, and which only adds undeceiving falsehood to disgusting vanity. For you to deny the merit of your poems, would be arraigning the fixed opinion of the public.

"As the new edition of my 'View of Society' is not yet ready, I have sent you the former edition, which I beg you will accept as a small mark of my esteem. It is sent by sea to the care of Mr Creech, and, along with these four volumes for yourself, I have also sent my 'Medical Sketches' in one volume, for my friend Mrs Dunlop of Dunlop: this you will be so obliging as to transmit, or, if you chance to pass soon by Dunlop, to give to her.

"I am happy to hear that your subscription is so ample, and shall rejoice at every piece of good fortune that befalls you. For you are a very great favourite in my family; and this is a higher compliment than perhaps you are aware of. It includes almost all the professions, and of course is a proof that your writings are adapted to various tastes and situations. My youngest son, who is at Winchester school, writes to me, that he is translating some stanzas of your 'Hallowe'en' into Latin verse, for the benefit of his comrades. This union of taste partly proceeds, no doubt, from the cement of Scottish partiality, with which they are all somewhat tinctured. Even your translator, who left Scotland too early in life for recollection, is not without it.

I remain, with great sincerity,
Your obedient servant,
J. MOORE.

more than once thought of paying her in kind, but have hitherto quitted the idea in hopeless despondency. I had never before heard of her; but the other day I got her poems, which, for several reasons, some belonging to the head, and others the offspring of the heart, give me a great deal of pleasure. I have little pretensions to critic lore; there are, I think, two characteristic features in her poetry —the unfettered wild flight of native genius, and the querulous, sombre tenderness of "time-settled sorrow."

I only know what pleases me, often without being able to tell why.

R. B.

No. XLVI.

TO JOHN BALLANTINE, Esq.

EDINBURGH, *Feb.* 24, 1787.

MY HONOURED FRIEND,

I WILL soon be with you now, in guid black prent;—in a week or ten days at farthest. I am obliged, against my own wish, to print subscribers' names; so if any of my Ayr friends have subscription bills, they must be sent into Creech directly. I am getting my phiz done by an eminent engraver, and if it can be ready in time, I will appear in my book, looking like all other *fools* to my title-page.*

R. B.

* This portrait is engraved by Mr Beugo, an artist who well merits the epithet bestowed on him by the Poet, after a picture of Mr Nasmyth, which he painted *con amore*, and liberally presented to Burns. This picture is of the cabinet size, and is now in the possession of Mr Alex. Cunningham, of Edinburgh.—*Cromek.*

Mr Cunningham states, that the portrait passed into the hands of Mr Burns after the death of Alex. Cunningham; and is now on its way to the Poet's son, Captain William Burns, in India.—M.

No. XLVII.

TO THE EARL OF GLENCAIRN.

EDINBURGH, *February*, 1787.

MY LORD,

I WANTED to purchase a profile of your lordship, which I was told was to be got in town; but I am truly sorry to see that a blundering painter has spoiled a "human face divine." The inclosed stanzas I intended to have written below a picture or profile of your lordship, could I have been so happy as to procure one with any thing of a likeness.

As I will soon return to my shades, I wanted to have something like a material object for my gratitude; I wanted to have it in my power to say to a friend, there is my noble patron, my generous benefactor. Allow me, my lord, to publish these verses. I conjure your lordship, by the honest throe of gratitude, by the generous wish of benevolence, by all the powers and feelings which compose the magnanimous mind, do not deny me this petition.* I owe much to your lordship: and, what has not in some other instances always been the case with me, the weight of the obligation is a pleasing load. I trust I have a heart as independent as your lordship's, than which I can say nothing more; and I would not be beholden to favours that would crucify my feelings. Your dignified character in life, and manner of supporting that character, are flattering to my pride; and I would be jealous of the purity of my grateful attachment, where I was under the patronage of one of the much favoured sons of fortune.

Almost every poet has celebrated his patrons, particularly when they were names dear to fame, and illustrious in their country; allow me, then, my lord, if you think the verses

* It does not appear that the Earl granted this request, nor have the verses alluded to been found among the Poet's MSS.—M.

have intrinsic merit, to tell the world how much I have the honour to be,

Your lordship's highly indebted,
And ever grateful humble servant,
R. B.

No. XLVIII.

TO THE EARL OF BUCHAN.*

My Lord,

The honour your lordship has done me, by your notice and advice in yours of the 1st instant, I shall ever gratefully remember:—

"Praise from thy lips 'tis mine with joy to boast,
They best can give it who deserve it most."

Your lordship touches the darling chord of my heart, when you advise me to fire my muse at Scottish story and Scottish scenes. I wish for nothing more than to make a leisurely pilgrimage through my native country; to sit and muse on those once hard-contended fields, where Caledonia, rejoicing, saw her bloody lion borne through broken ranks to victory and fame; and, catching the inspiration, to pour the deathless names in song. But, my lord, in the midst of these enthusiastic reveries, a long-visaged, dry moral-looking phantom strides across my imagination, and pronounces these emphatic words:

"I, Wisdom, dwell with Prudence. Friend, I do not come to open the ill-closed wounds of your follies and misfortunes, merely to give you pain: I wish through these wounds to imprint a lasting lesson on your heart. I will not mention how many of my salutary advices you have despised: I have given you line upon line and precept upon precept; and while I was chalking out to you the straight way to

* The Earl of Buchan was the very pink of parsimonious patrons.—M.

wealth and character, with audacious effrontery you have zigzagged across the path, contemning me to my face: you know the consequences. It is not yet three months since home was so hot for you that you were on the wing for the western shore of the Atlantic, not to make a fortune, but to hide your misfortune.

"Now that your dear-loved Scotia puts it in your power to return to the situation of your forefathers, will you follow these will-o'-wisp meteors of fancy and whim, till they bring you once more to the brink of ruin? I grant that the utmost ground you can occupy is but half a step from the veriest poverty; but still it is half a step from it. If all that I can urge be ineffectual, let her who seldom calls to you in vain, let the call of pride prevail with you. You know how you feel at the iron gripe of ruthless oppression: you know how you bear the galling sneer of contumelious greatness. I hold you out the conveniences, the comforts of life, independence, and character, on the one hand; I tender you servility, dependance, and wretchedness, on the other. I will not insult your understanding by bidding you make a choice."

This, my lord, is unanswerable. I must return to my humble station, and woo my rustic muse in my wonted way at the plough-tail. Still, my lord, while the drops of life warm my heart, gratitude to that dear-loved country in which I boast my birth, and gratitude to those her distinguished sons, who have honoured me so much with their patronage and approbation, shall, while stealing through my humble shades, ever distend my bosom, and at times, as now, draw forth the swelling tear.

R. B.

No. XLIX.

TO MR JAMES CANDLISH,

STUDENT IN PHYSIC, GLASGOW COLLEGE.

EDINBURGH, *March* 21*st*, 1787.

MY EVER DEAR OLD ACQUAINTANCE,

I WAS equally surprised and pleased at your letter, though I dare say you will think by my delaying so long to write to you that I am so drowned in the intoxication of good fortune as to be indifferent to old, and once dear connexions. The truth is, I was determined to write a good letter, full of argument, amplification, erudition, and, as Bayes says, *ail that.* I thought of it, and thought of it, and, by my soul I could not; and, lest you should mistake the cause of my silence, I just sit down to tell you so. Don't give yourself credit, though, that the strength of your logic scares me: the truth is, I never mean to meet you on that ground at all. You have shown me one thing which was to be demonstrated: that strong pride of reasoning, with a little affectation of singularity, may mislead the best of hearts. I likewise, since you and I were first acquainted, in the pride of despising old women's stories, ventured in "the daring path Spinosa trod;" but experience of the weakness, not the strength of human powers, made me glad to grasp at revealed religion.

I am still, in the Apostle Paul's phrase, "The old man with his deeds," as when we were sporting about the "Lady Thorn." I shall be four weeks here yet at least; and so I shall expect to hear from you; welcome sense, welcome nonsense.

I am, with the warmest sincerity,

R. B.

No. L.

TO ———.

ON FERGUSSON'S HEADSTONE.

EDINBURGH, *March*, 1787.

MY DEAR SIR,

You may think, and too justly, that I am a selfish, ungrateful fellow, having received so many repeated instances of kindness from you, and yet never putting pen to paper to say thank you; but if you knew what a devil of a life my conscience has led me on that account, your good heart would think yourself too much avenged. By the bye, there is nothing in the whole frame of man which seems to be so unaccountable as that thing called conscience. Had the troublesome yelping cur powers efficient to prevent a mischief, he might be of use; but at the beginning of the business, his feeble efforts are to the workings of passion as the infant frosts of an autumnal morning to the unclouded fervour of the rising sun: and no sooner are the tumultuous doings of the wicked deed over, than, amidst the bitter native consequences of folly in the very vortex of our horrors, up starts conscience, and harrows us with the feelings of the damned.

I have inclosed you, by way of expiation, some verse and prose, that, if they merit a place in your truly entertaining miscellany, you are welcome to. The prose extract is literally as Mr Sprott sent it me.

The inscription on the stone is as follows:—

"HERE LIES ROBERT FERGUSSON, POET,
"Born, September 5th, 1751—Died, 16th October, 1774.

"No sculptured marble here, nor pompous lay,
'No storied urn nor animated bust;'
This simple stone directs pale Scotia's way
To pour her sorrows o'er her poet's dust."

On the other side of the stone is as follows:

"By special grant of the managers to Robert Burns, who erected this stone, this burial-place is to remain for ever sacred to the memory of Robert Fergusson."

Session-house within the kirk of Canongate, the twenty-second day of February, one thousand seven hundred eighty-seven years.

Sederunt of the Managers of the Kirk and Kirk Yard funds of Canongate.

Which day, the treasurer to the said funds produced a letter from Mr Robert Burns, of date the 6th current, which was read and appointed to be engrossed in their sederunt book, and of which letter the tenor follows:—

"To the honourable baillies of Canongate, Edinburgh, —Gentlemen, I am sorry to be told that the remains of Robert Fergusson, the so justly celebrated poet, a man whose talents for ages to come will do honour to our Caledonian name, lie in your church-yard among the ignoble dead, unnoticed and unknown.

"Some memorial to direct the steps of the lovers of Scottish song, when they wish to shed a tear over the 'narrow house' of the bard who is no more, is surely a tribute due to Fergusson's memory: a tribute I wish to have the honour of paying.

"I petition you then, gentlemen, to permit me to lay a simple stone over his revered ashes, to remain an unalienable property to his deathless fame. I have the honour to be, gentlemen, your very humble servant (*sic subscribitur*)

"Robert Burns."

Therefore the said managers, in consideration of the laudable and disinterested motion of Mr Burns, and the propriety of his request, did, and hereby do, unanimously, grant power and liberty to the said Robert Burns to erect a headstone at the grave of the said Robert Fergusson, and to keep

up and preserve the same to his memory in all time coming. Extracted forth of the records of the managers, by

WILLIAM SPROTT, Clerk.*

* The following extract from the 'Elogia Sepulchralia Edinburgena,' on this subject, may be interesting to some readers. "From inattention in the mason employed to erect this monument, the foundation soon gave way, and it was in danger of falling. When this was observed, Burns, as well as Fergusson, was then also numbered with the dead. Some members of the Esculapian Club, animated by that pious zeal for departed merit, which had before led them to prevent some other sepulchral monuments from going to ruin, applied for liberty to repair this tribute from one Poet to the memory of another; and, permission being granted, they took that opportunity of affixing to it an additional inscription commemorating the genius of Burns. The poetical part of it is taken, almost verbatim, from the Elegy written by Burns himself on Captain Matthew Henderson.

Dignum laude verum Musa vetat mori.

Lo! Genius, proudly, while to Fame she turns,
Twines CURRIE'S laurels with the wreath of BURNS.

ROSCOE.

TO THE MEMORY OF

ROBERT BURNS, THE AYRSHIRE BARD:

WHO WAS BORN AT DOONSIDE,
ON THE 25TH OF JANUARY, 1759;
AND DIED AT DUMFRIES,
ON THE 22ND OF JULY, 1796.

O ROBERT BURNS! the Man, the Brother!
And art thou gone,—and gone for ever!
And hast thou cross'd that unknown river,
Life's dreary bound!
Like thee, where shall we find another,
The world around!

Go to your sculptured tombs, ye Great,
In a' the tinsel trash o' state!
But by thy honest turf I'll wait,
Thou man of worth!
And weep the sweetest Poet's fate
E'er lived on earth.

No. LI.

TO MRS DUNLOP.

EDINBURGH, *March 22d*, 1787.

MADAM,

I READ your letter with watery eyes. A little, very little while ago, I had scarce a friend but the stubborn pride of my own bosom; now I am distinguished, patronized, befriended by you. Your friendly advices, I will not give

We make the following extract from a letter addressed to the Poet on the subject of Fergusson's headstone:—

8th March, 1787.

"I am truly happy to know you have found a friend in ———; his patronage of you does him great honour. He is truly a good man; by far the best I ever knew, or, perhaps, ever shall know in this world. But I must not speak all I think of him, lest I should be thought partial.

"So you have obtained liberty from the magistrates to erect a stone over Fergusson's grave? I do not doubt it; such things have been, as Shakspeare says, "in the olden-time;"

> "The poet's fate is here in emblem shown,
> He ask'd for bread, and he received a stone."

"It is I believe upon poor Butler's tomb that this is written But how many brothers of Parnassus, as well as poor Butler and poor Fergusson, have asked for bread, and been served with the same sauce!

"The magistrates gave you liberty, did they? Oh, generous magistrates! ——— celebrated over the three kingdoms for his public spirit, gives a poor poet liberty to raise a tomb to a poor poet's memory! most generous! ——— once upon a time gave that same poet the mighty sum of eighteen pence for a copy of his works. But then it must be considered that the poet was at this time absolutely starving, and besought his aid with all the earnestness of hunger. And over and above he received a ——— worth at least one third of the value, in exchange, but which, I believe, the poet afterwards very ungratefully expunged.

"Next week I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you in Edinburgh, and, as my stay will be for eight or ten days, I wish you or ——— would take a snug well-aired bed-room for me, where I may have the pleasure of seeing you over a morning cup of tea.

them the cold name of criticisms, I receive with reverence. I have made some small alterations in what I before had printed. I have the advice of some very judicious friends among the literati here, but with them I sometimes find it necessary to claim the privilege of thinking for myself. The noble Earl of Glencairn, to whom I owe more than to any man, does me the honour of giving me his strictures: his hints, with respect to impropriety or indelicacy, I follow implicitly.

You kindly interest yourself in my future views and prospects; there I can give you no light. It is all

But by all accounts it will be a matter of some difficulty to see you at all, unless your company is bespoke a week before hand. There is a great rumour here concerning your great intimacy with the Duchess of ———, and other ladies of distinction. I am really told that 'cards to invite fly by thousands each night;' and if you had one, I suppose there would also be 'bribes to your old secretary.' It seems you are resolved to make hay while the sun shines, and avoid if possible the fate of poor Fergusson, ... *Quærenda pecunia primum est, virtus post nummos,* is a good maxim to thrive by: you seemed to despise it while in this country, but probably some philosopher in Edinburgh has taught you better sense.

"Pray are you yet engraving as well as printing—are you yet seized

'With itch of picture in the front,
With bays and wicked rhyme upon't?'

"But I must give up this trifling, and attend to matters that more concern myself; so, as the Aberdeen wit says, 'adieu dryly, we sal drink phan we meet.'"

The above extract is from a letter of one of the ablest of our Poet's correspondents, which contains some interesting anecdotes of Fergusson, that we should have been happy to have inserted, if they could have been authenticated. The writer is mistaken in supposing the magistrates of Edinburgh had any share in the transaction respecting the monument erected for Fergusson by our bard; this, it is evident, passed between Burns and the Kirk Session of the Canongate. Neither at Edinburgh, nor any where else, do magistrates usually trouble themselves to inquire how the house of a poor poet is furnished, or how his grave is adorned. —*Currie.*

"Dark as was Chaos ere the infant sun
Was roll'd together, or had tried his beams
Athwart the gloom profound."*

The appellation of a Scottish bard is by far my highest pride; to continue to deserve it is my most exalted ambition. Scottish scenes and Scottish story are the themes I could wish to sing. I have no dearer aim than to have it in my power, unplagued with the routine of business, for which heaven knows I am unfit enough, to make leisurely pilgrimages through Caledonia; to sit on the fields of her battles; to wander on the romantic banks of her rivers; and to muse by the stately towers or venerable ruins, once the honoured abodes of her heroes.

But these are all Utopian thoughts: I have dallied long enough with life; 'tis time to be in earnest. I have a fond, an aged mother to care for: and some other bosom ties perhaps equally tender. Where the individual only suffers by the consequences of his own thoughtlessness, indolence, or folly, he may be excusable; nay, shining abilities, and some of the nobler virtues, may half sanctify a heedless character; but where God and nature have intrusted the welfare of others to his care; where the trust is sacred, and the ties are dear, that man must be far gone in selfishness, or strangely lost to reflection, whom these connexions will not rouse to exertion.

I guess that I shall clear between two and three hundred pounds by my authorship; with that sum I intend, so far as I may be said to have any intention, to return to my old acquaintance, the plough, and, if I can meet with a lease by which I can live, to commence farmer. I do not intend to give up poetry; being bred to labour, secures me independence, and the muses are my chief, sometimes have been my only enjoyment. If my practice second my resolution, I shall have principally at heart the serious business

* This seems to have been a favourite quotation in the mouth of Burns, as it occurs frequently in his letters.—M.